A

TRANSLATION

OF THE

INFERNO

OF

DANTE ALIGHIERI,

IN ENGLISH VERSE.

WITH

Hiſtorical Notes, and the Life of *Dante.*

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

A SPECIMEN OF A NEW TRANSLATION

OF THE

ORLANDO FURIOSO

OF

ARIOSTO.

By HENRY BOYD, A. M.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

I account it a misfortune that I had not ſeen the preſent Biſhop of CHESTER'S *Diſcourſes before the concluſion of the* HISTORICAL ESSAY *went to Preſs; as, in that caſe, I could have enriched it with ſeveral very noble and philoſophical Arguments, on the Influence of Religion in the Middle Ages. I am very happy however to find, that, as far as I have gone, I have the honour of concurring in Sentiment with one ſo highly diſtinguiſhed as his Lordſhip in the literary World.*

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE AND REVEREND

FREDERICK,

LORD BISHOP OF DERRY, AND EARL OF BRISTOL.

MY LORD,

YOUR Lordſhip's great condeſcenſion, in offering your Patronage to the enſuing Work, ſtamps it with a value, which, otherwiſe, I am afraid, it would hardly poſſeſs. Conſonant to your Lordſhip's EPISCOPAL conduct, it proves your attention even to the humbleſt claims of induſtry and application. To enlightened eyes, it even marks the extenſive views of the

the PATRIOT; however minute the preſent object of your attention may ſeem to vulgar obſervation. The minds of the multitude are very inadequate to comprehend the liberality of your Lordſhip's motives: they cannot ſee, what to you is ſo evident, that *public ſpirit depends upon an enlargement of ſentiment, which can neither be acquired, nor preſerved, unleſs by a due attention to the intereſts of Learning, and particularly to the Belles Lettres.*

However unworthy of your Lordſhip's Patronage the following Work may appear, I hope the INSTANCE at leaſt may awaken other competitors, far better entitled to your protection, than

YOUR LORDSHIP'S

Moſt obedient,

And grateful

Humble Servant,

KILLEIGH,
near *Tullamore*,
Jan. 20, 1785.

HENRY BOYD.

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A

SUMMARY VIEW

OF THE

INFERNO OF DANTE.

From WARTON's Hiſtory of *Engliſh Poetry*. Vol. III. Sect. 33.

"NOTHING more expreſsly illuſtrates and aſcertains the reſpective merits and genius of different Poets, than a juſt appoſition of their performances on ſimilar ſubjects. Having examined at large SACKVILLE's deſcription of Hell, at the beginning of the Poem, called, the MIRROUR of MAGISTRATES; for the ſake of throwing a ſtill

 ſtronger

ſtronger light on his manner of treating a fiction, which gives ſo large a ſcope to fancy, I ſhall employ the remainder of this Section in ſetting before the Reader a general view of DANTE's ITALIAN POEM, called COMMEDIA, containing a deſcription of Hell, Purgatory, and Paradiſe; and written about the year 1310.——In the mean while, I preſume, that moſt of my readers will recollect, and apply the ſixth Book of VIRGIL, to which, however, we ſhall refer occaſionally.—Although Dante uſes the Ghoſt of VIRGIL as a Myſtagogue, in imitation of TULLY, who, in the SOMNIUM SCIPIONIS ſuppoſed *SCIPIO* to have been ſhewn the other world by his anceſtor AFRICANUS; yet he ſeems to have had his eye more immediately to the Exordium of an old forgotten FLORENTINE Poem, called TESORETTO; written in a ſhort irregular meaſure, exhibiting a Cyclopede of Theoretic and Practic Philoſophy, and compoſed by his Preceptor BRUNETTO LATINI, about the year 1270.

1270.——BRUNETTO ſuppoſes himſelf loſt in a wood, at the foot of a mountain, covered with animals, flowers, plants, and fruits, of ſeveral ſpecies, and ſubject to the ſupreme command of a wonderful lady, whom he thus deſcribes: "Her "head touched the Heavens, which ſerved at "once for a *veil* and an *ornament*, the ſky grew "dark or ſerene at her voice, and her arms ex- "tended to the extremity of the earth."

THIS bold perſonification is NATURE:—She converſes with the Poet, and deſcribes the formation of the world; ſhe enters into a moſt unphiloſophical and unpoetical detail of the phyſical ſyſtem, developes the head of man, and points out the ſeat of ſenſation and memory.—From PHYSICS ſhe proceeds to MORALS; but her principles are here confined to divinity, and the laws of the church, which ſhe couches in technical rhymes.

DANTE, like his maſter BRUNETTO, is bewildered in an unfrequented foreſt. He attempts to climb a mountain, whoſe ſummit is illuminated with the riſing ſun. A furious leopard, preſt by hunger, and a lion, at whoſe aſpect the AIR IS AFFRIGHTED, accompanied by a WOLF, withſtand his progreſs, and force him to fly precipitately into the profundities of a pathleſs valley, where, (ſays the Poet) "THE SUN WAS SILENT."—In the midſt of a vaſt ſolitude he ſees a ſpectre, of whom he implores pity and help: The ſpectre haſtens to his cries: It proves to be the ſpirit of VIRGIL, whom BEATRICE, DANTE's miſtreſs, (who had died long before) had ſent to give him courage, and ſupport him while he viewed the infernal regions. Virgil begins a long diſcourſe with DANTE, and expoſtulates with him for chuſing to wander through the rough obſcurities of a barren and dreary vale, when the top of the neighbouring mountain afforded every delight:

And

The converſation of VIRGIL, and the name of BEATRICE, by degrees diſſipate the fears of the Poet, who explains his ſituation. His returning to himſelf, and the revival of his ſtrength and ſpirits, he compares to a flower, ſmitten by the froſts of night, which again lifts its ſhrinking head, and expands its vivid colours, at the firſt gleaming of the morning ſun.

" Under the guidance of VIRGIL DANTE penetrates the infernal regions. He does not on this occaſion always avail himſelf of VIRGIL's deſcriptions and mythologies; at leaſt the formation of DANTE's imagery is of another ſchool. He feigns his HELL to be a prodigious and almoſt bottomleſs abyſs, which from its aperture to its loweſt depths preſerves a rotund ſhape; or rather an immenſe perpendicular cavern, which, opening as it deſcends into different circles, forms ſo many diſtinct ſubterraneous regions.—We are ſtruck with hor-

ror

ror at the commencement of this dreadful adventure.

The firſt object that the poet perceives is a gate of braſs, over which are inſcribed in characters of a dark hue, theſe verſes:—* *Per me ſi va, &c.*

" Thro' me ye paſs to mourning's dark domain ;
Thro' me to ſcenes where grief muſt ever pine ;
Thro' me to miſery's devoted train.
Juſtice and Pow'r in my great Founder join,
And Love and Wiſdom all his Fabrics rear.
Wiſdom above controll, and Love divine.
Before me Nature ſaw no Work appear
Save Works eternal, ſuch was I ordain'd,
Quit ev'ry hope all ye who enter here!"

Mr. Hayley's ſpecimen of Dante.

* Inferno, Canto 3d.

There

There is a ſevere Solemnity in theſe abrupt and comprehenſive ſentences, but the Idea of ſuch an inſcription on the brazen portals of Hell was ſuggeſted to DANTE by books of chivalry, in which the gates of an impregnable enchanted Caſtle is often inſcribed with words, importing the wonders, or the dangers to be found within. Over the door of every chamber in SPENSER's necromantic palace of BUSIRANE was written a threat to the champion who preſumed to enter. The total excluſion of Hope from Hell, ſo finely introduced here, and ſo forceably, was probably remembered by MILTON, a Diſciple of DANTE, when he deſcribes

" Regions of ſorrow, doleful ſhades, where Peace
Nor Reſt can never dwell, HOPE never comes
That comes to all ;

"It is not my deſign to follow DANTE, regularly through his dialogues and adventures with the crowds of Ghoſts, antient and modern, which he meets in the courſe of his infernal Journey.—In thoſe Interviews there is often much of the politics and party of his own times,* and of alluſions to recent facts; Nor have I leiſure particularly to diſplay our author's puniſhments and phantoms. I obſerved in general that the ground-work of his HELL is claſſical, but with many Gothic and romantic innovations. The burning Lakes, the Foſſes and fiery Towers that ſurround the CITY of DIS, and the three Furies that ſtand at the entrance, are touched with new ſtrokes: The GORGONS, HYDRAS, the CHIMERAS, CERBERUS, and the reſt of VIRGIL's or rather HOMER's infernal apparitions are dilated with new touches, of the TERRIBLE, and ſometimes of the RIDICULOUS,

* See Hiſtorical Eſſay annexed.

by

by the addition of comic or incongruous circumſtances, yet without any deſign of burleſque. Becauſe VIRGIL had mentioned the HARPIES in a ſingle word only: In one of the horrible groves which DANTE paſſes, conſiſting of trees whoſe leaves are black, and whoſe knotty boughs are harder than iron, the HARPIES build their neſts.

They flit around on broad, portentous wing,
And, hov'ring high, their baleful dirges ſing;
Then people all the ſhade, a diſmal throng.
Down to the breaſt they ſeem'd of female race,
But duſky plumage all the reſt deface:
And with ſtrong talons to the boughs they clung.

Deſcription of the FOREST *of* SUICIDE.

INFERNO, Canto 13, St. 3.

CACUS, whom Virgil called SEMIFER in his 8th book, appears in the ſhape of a *Centaur*, covered with curling ſnakes, and upon whoſe neck is perched

perched a Dragon, hovering with expanded wings.

He * fled in horror o'er the burning waſte ;
Behind, a Centaur form, with furious haſte
Follow'd his track ; and o'er his ſhoulders broad,
Where the fleet courſer with the man combin'd,
A thouſand warping ſnakes their volumes twin'd,
Such as MAREMMA's plains yet never ſhow'd.

Full on his neck, a burning Dragon borne,
With winnow'd flames oppreſt the wretch forlorn,
Who dar'd the whirlwind of his wings to meet:
"Behold the *Robber's doom," the *Mantuan* cry'd,
Who AVENTINE's proud Hill in ſlaughter dy'd,
And fill'd with plunder'd ſtore, his dark retreat.

* GHINO DE PISTOIA, whoſe puniſhment he had deſcribed before. Viz. CACUS. See Virg. L. 8.

" He

" He ſtems the coming croud, with furious ſpeed
A puniſhment to match his wiles, decreed
When ſtruggling ſteers, with more than mortal force
Down, backward, to his bloody cave he drew.
Reverſt, their footſteps mark'd the midnight dew,
In vain, for ſoon ALCIDES trackt his courſe."

Canto 25. St. 3, 4, 5, &c.

" It is ſuppoſed that DANTE took his idea of the INFERNO from a magnificent nocturnal repreſentation of Hell exhibited by the Pope, in honour of the Biſhop of OSTIA on ARNO at FLORENCE.---We ſhould not attempt to excuſe any extravagance in the writings and manners of the middle ages.—DANTE choſe the ſubject as a reader of Virgil, the religious myſtery exhibited on the ARNO, however magnificent, was probably a ſpectacle purely rothodox, and perfectly conformable to the ideas of the church.---Religious ſtories and theologic opini-

ons

ons were then, and long after, the favourite ſubjects of the infant Drama. The famous hiſtorical play called the CREATION OF THE WORLD, took up ſeveral days in repreſentation. If we allow that ſuch a ſpectacle could ſuggeſt the ſubject, with all its inconſiſtencies, it never could have furniſhed any conſiderable part of this wonderful compound of claſſic and romantic fancy, of pagan and chriſtian theology, of real and fictitious hiſtory, of tragical and comic incidents, of familiar and heroic manners, and of ſatirical and ſublime poetry.

"But the greateſt extravagancies diſcover an originality of invention, and even his abſurdities border on ſublimity. We are ſurpriſed that a Poet ſhould write an hundred Cantos on Hell, Purgatory, and Paradiſe; but his prolixity is partly owing to his want of art and method, and is common to all early compoſitions, where every thing

thing is related circumſtantially, and without rejection, and not in thoſe general terms which are uſed by modern writers."

"DANTE has beautifully enlarged Virgil's ſhort compariſon of the ſouls lingering on the banks of LETHE, to the numerous leaves falling from the trees in autumn.——

"As the tall Grove on autumn's cloſing day,
Perceives her mellowing honours fleet away,
'Till earth is hid beneath the frequent fall.
So the loſt Sons of ADAM's luckleſs race
Throng to the pinnace, and embark apace
Swift as the falcon hears her maſter's call.

Canto 3d. 24.

In the fields inhabited by unhappy lovers, he ſees SEMIRAMIS, ACHILLES, PARIS, TRISTAN, or

Sir

Sir TRISTRAM,* a Knight of Arthur's Round Table. Among many others of his friends he finds Franciſca, daughter to GUIDO DE POLENTA, (in whoſe palace at RAVENNA DANTE died.) The ſtory of her unfortunate paſſion for her brother-in-law is told with delicate touches of nature, and the ſymptoms of their growing paſſion are deſcribed by a man, who from many circumſtances of his own amours, as well as from this, ſeems to have poſſeſſed the moſt refined ſenſibilities on the delicacies of the tender paſſion.----But this deſcription where nature, ſentiment, and the graces are concerned, I have to contraſt with ſcenes of a very different nature.——SALVADOR ROSA has here borrowed the pencil from CORREGIO. DANTE's beauties are not of the ſoft and gentlekind.

" Thro' many a Region dolorous
They paſt; and many a dark and dreary vale,
O'er many a frozen, many a fiery ALP.

* One of the old Commentators ſays, that TRISTAN was born in CORNWALL a *city* in England.

" An hurricane ſuddenly riſing on the banks of the STYX is thus deſcribed :

(Ye Sound of intellect ! the truth retain
Hid in the mazes of the myſtic ſtrain !)
Not long we ſtood 'till thro' the vaſt profound
Diſmal afar, but more aſtounding near,
A mighty, ruſhing noiſe aſſail'd mine ear
The vaulted Deep, and trembling ſhores reſound.

A whirlwind. thus, the child of heav'nly wrath
Thro' the tall foreſt ſweeps an ample path,
And rends her ſhatter'd boughs, and flings afar.
Thro' the long avenue, in duſty pride
The deſolating God is ſeen to ride,
And flocks, and ſwains, avoid the coming war.

" Now turn thy ſharpen'd eye to yonder Steep
Where damps, and noiſome fogs eternal weep."

I look'd, and ſaw a throng, in dire diſmay
Flying in ſhoals, as when the finny train
Before the ſable Monarch of the Main
Innum'rous ſcud, and fill the ample bay.

Inferno, Canto ix, 11, 12, 13, &c.

"DANTE and his Myſtagogue meet the monſter GERIONEO, or FRAUD. He has the face of a man, with a mild and benign aſpect, but his human form ends with a voluminous train of an immenſe length, terminated by a ſting which he brandiſhes like a ſcorpion, his hands are rough with ſcales and briſtles, his breaſt, back, and ſides, have all the rich colours diſplayed in the looms of TARTARY and TURKEY, or the labours of ARACHNE:----To ſpeak in SPENSER's language, he is "a Dragon, "horrible and bright," no monſter in romance is more ſavage and ſuperb.——

"This perhaps gave a hint to MILTON's formidable ſhape, although the fiction is founded on the claſſics,

The

The one ſeem'd woman to the waſte, and fair,
But ended foul in many a ſcaly fold
Voluminous and vaſt, &c.——

VIRGIL mounts the back of Gerioneo, and places DANTE before him; "that you may not, "ſays he, "be hurt with his ſting." Virgil then tells Gerioneo not to move too rapidly, for, conſider, "ſays he, what a new burden you carry." In this manner they travel in the air through TARTARUS, and from the back of the monſter Gerioneo, Dante looks down on the tempeſtuous lake of MALEBOLGE.—This imagery is at once ſublime and extravagant, but later Italian Poets have fallen into the ſame ridiculous mixture.—"In this horrid ſituation," ſays DANTE,

——My trembling limbs with horror ſhook
When firſt the ſailing fiend the ſhore forſook,

Shooting with level wing the gulf of Hell.
On either hand retired the flaming waſte,
His fanning wings my failing ſenſe refreſht
As o'er the deep he ſoar'd with eaſy ſail.

Far to the right the bellowing flood deſcends,
Above, the frowning rock for ever bends;
While with its ſolemn ſound, the ſhriek of woe
Roſe, mingling oft and loud: ſuſpenſe I hung
Liſt'ning afar the deep tumultuous throng
And mark'd the glimm'ring fires that rag'd below.

Inferno, 17, 20, 21.

"As this airy journey is copied from the flight of ICARUS and PHAETON, it was the original of the IPPOGRIFO of ARIOSTO, nor is it quite improbable that Milton, (though he has greatly improved and dignified the idea) might have caught from this the fiction of SATAN, ſoaring over the infernal abyſs.—At laſt GENONEO having circuited the air

air like a falcon, towering without prey, depoſits his burden and vaniſhes.

"While they are wandering along the banks of MALEBOLGE, in a ſort of dubious light, between night and day, DANTE ſuddenly hears the ſound of an horn, more dreadful than thunder, or the horn of ORLANDO: Then he diſcovers through the gloom what he takes to be high and vaſt towers; theſe were the giants that are ſuppoſed to have warred againſt Heaven, ſtanding in a row, half ſtanding in, and half extending without an immenſe frozen gulf.

As when the miſt forſakes the mountain's height
And ſteepled rocks emerge in open light,
In dread diſtinction thus the Stygian ſcene
Her monſtrous births diſclos'd, a proſpect dire,
As round ſome fortreſs the tall tow'rs aſpire,
So ſeem'd the chiefs, and ſuch their haughty mien.

Embodied thus on PELION's ſteep they ſtrove,
And met with mortal fires the bolts of Jove.
But nearer now, their lineaments deform
Their ample breaſts we ſaw, with pale diſmay
Their long extravagant arms that croſt the bay,
And fronts with light'ning ſcar'd that met the ſtorm.
Inferno, Canto 31-5-6.

NIMROD accoſts him in a medley of all languages, uttered in a horrible voice. —— Another, (EPHIALTES) appears clad in iron, and bound in huge chains.—DANTE wiſhes then to ſee BRIAREUS or ÆGEON, but is anſwered that he is confined in another quarter.

" And, ſternly ſad, ſurveys the frozen waſte."

NIMROD appears ten ells high out of the frozen flood, with that horn hung about his neck which he had ſounded ſo vehemently. ANTÆUS is alone unconfined,

unconfined, as being deſtined to waft them down. He is commanded by Virgil to advance, they both mount on his ſhoulders, and are gently lifted over the barrier, and ſet down on the banks of Cocytus, "the Giant ſtooped, ſays he," like the leaning tower of CASCENDRA, and when he had let us down, ſprung back to his pitch like a bent-maſt in a ſtorm." One cannot help obſerving what indeed has been already hinted, how judiciouſly MILTON in a ſimilar argument has retained the great beauties, and avoided the puerilities of this bold invention, at the ſame time it is worth remarking that DANTE has ſometimes heightened, and ſometimes diminiſhed the legitimate and claſſical deſcriptions of Virgil.

One of the torments of the damned in DANTE is the puniſhment of being eternally confined in lakes of ice.

Nor

Nor deſolate extends the dreary ſpace,
Like the dark legions of the croaking race
When the ſoft influence of the ſpring they hail
With chatt'ring teeth, and ſtony eyes aghaſt
Immur'd in ice beneath the bitter blaſt,
With rigid faces prone the ſinners wail.

INFERNO Canto 32-7.

The Ice is deſcribed to be like that of the *Danube* or *Tanais*.——This ſpecies of torment (which has been adopted both by SHAKESPEARE and MILTON) has its origin in the legendary HELL of the Monks.—The hint ſeems to be taken from an obſcure text in JOB, dilated by St. Jerom, and the early commentators.—The torments of Hell in which the puniſhment of cold is painted at large, had formed a viſionary romance, under the name of St. Patrick's Purgatory or Cave, long before

DANTE's

DANTE's time: The *venerable* BEDE who lived in the ſeventh century, has found a future manſion of exiſtence for departed ſouls with this mode of puniſhment.—In the hands of DANTE it has aſſumed many terrible and groteſque circumſtances, that make one laugh and ſhudder at the ſame time. In ſome of his deſcriptions DANTE is very indelicate, and even his diction is no leſs ſordid than his imagery.—Yet, it is not to be ſuppoſed that a man of ſtrong ſenſe and genius, whoſe underſtanding had been cultivated by all the learning of his time, and who had paſſed his life in the Courts of ſovereign Princes, would have indulged himſelf in ſuch diſguſting pictures, had he been at all apprehenſive that his readers would have been diſguſted. But rude and early Poets deſcribe every thing, they follow nature to all her receſſes, and if they are indelicate, it is to be remembered, that they wrote before indelicacy became offenſive.

" Some

" Some of the guilty are made objects of contempt by being transformed into beaſtly or ridiculous ſhapes.—This is from the fable of CIRCE.

" In others the human figure is made ridiculous by diſtortion, but DANTE has diſplayed more true poetry in deſcribing a real event, the ſtory of UGGHOLINO, Count of PISA, than in ſome of his beſt fictions.

" It is not improbable that the ſhades of unfortunate men who, deſcribed under peculiar ſituations, and with their proper attributes, are introduced by DANTE relating their hiſtories at large in Hell, might give the hint to that very long and very unequal Poem, the MIRROUR of MAGISTRATES, and BOCCACIO'S SERIES of the miſfortunes of illuſtrious men.

A

COMPARATIVE VIEW

OF THE

INFERNO,

With ſome other POEMS *relative to the* ORIGINAL PRINCIPLES *of* HUMAN NATURE, *on which they are founded, or to which they appeal.*

IN this age of enlightened reaſon and diſcovery, when it is grown a kind of literary paſtime to attack every eſtabliſhment, and when the old fabrics of reaſon and experience are often expoſed to the wanton aſſaults of genius.—It is but natural, that the

the old imperial code of criticiſm ſhould begin to loſe ſome of its authority.

It is now grown familiar to appeal to the ſentiments of nature from the dictates of ARISTOTLE, and Poets who were ignorant of his rules, or did not chuſe to plan their works according to them, may at laſt expect a fair hearing; after having been long deemed criminals in the eyes of a law to which they were not amenable. Nor is there any danger of unworthy claimants pleading admittance into the rank of claſſics in conſequence of the laws of criticiſm having taken a more liberal turn. Tho' the reward of literary fame or diſhonour be no longer at the diſpoſal of an arbitrary JUDGE, but with the other ſacred rights of Engliſhmen, are depoſited in the more liberal hands of a JURY, yet the verdict of the heart which admits the claim of genius, will, by the ſame ſacred inſtinct which gives a ſtamp to merit,

merit, be led to reprobate the production which does not fall in with its ſentiments, or appeal to the concluſions of reaſon.

The venerable old Bard who is the ſubject of the preſent enquiry has been long neglected, perhaps for that very reaſon, becauſe the merit of his Poem could not be tried by the reigning laws of which the author was ignorant, or which he did not chuſe to obſerve: He always indeed was a favourite with ſuch as were poſſeſt of true taſte, and dared to think for themſelves; but ſince the French, the reſtorers of the art of criticiſm, caſt a damp upon original invention, the character of DANTE has been thrown under a deeper ſhade. That agreeable and volatile nation found in themſelves an inſuperable averſion to the gloomy and romantic bard, whoſe genius, ardent, melancholy, and ſublime, was ſo different from their own,

and

and it is well known how ſoon they became the ſovereign arbiters of taſte, and how univerſally the FRENCH ſchool of compoſition ſucceeded to the ITALIAN. Like SHAKESPEAR, the poetry of DANTE, unfettered by rules, is diſtinguiſhed by bold original ſtrokes of ſublimity and pathos, and often by juſt and ſtriking delineations of character, but the nature of Epic Poetry (if HIS will be allowed that name) and the obſcurity of his language deprived him of ſome advantages poſſeſſed by the BRITISH bard. An Epic Poet cannot immediately appeal to the feelings of the crowd as the writer of the drama can. He muſt be content with the approbation of the ſtudious, or at leaſt of ſuch as have leiſure to read; but the dramatiſt, even if his genius be not of the foremoſt kind, has the aſſiſtance of the actor to envigorate his ſentiments. His heroes appear to the naked eye—the Heroes of Epic Poetry only are ſeen through the teleſcope of fancy, by the eye of the recluſe contemplatiſt;

templatiſt :—the former are favourites of the multitude, and the multitude gives immediate fame. The laurels of the heroic bard are of more tardy growth, and are more at the mercy of chance. To be convinced that this diverſity proceeds from the operation of cauſes that act uniformly, we need only reflect on the different fortunes of HOMER, and his three pupils ÆSCHYLUS, SOPHOCLES and EURIPIDES, during their lives, not to mention our own MILTON and SHAKESPEARE.

DANTE and HOMER are ſo far ſimilar in their fortunes and genius, that they were both the earlieſt poetical writers known in their reſpective languages, and both were remarkable for a ſimplicity of ſtyle, and a greatneſs of thought: Both were wanderers, and at leaſt for part of their lives, dependant upon precarious bounty: But the parallel proceeds no further; HOMER had the advantage of chuſing for his ſubject, an event, one of the moſt illuſtrious

illuſtrious and intereſting in the annals of the world, an event which gave occaſion to the diſplay of a variety of characters, and the agency of every paſſion. This noble ſcene he has unfolded with ſuch peculiar art; he has ſhewn ſuch a knowledge of the ſprings of human action, and deſcribed a ſeries of incidents depending upon each other, in a manner ſo probable, and yet ſo intereſting, that the rules of writing an Epic Poem, drawn from his ILIAD and ODYSSEY have been long reduced into a ſyſtem. Theſe rules DANTE could not obſerve, as it is probable he did not know them; however, he does not write without a plan, ſtill more ſimple and leſs complicated than Homer's, *The converſion of a ſinner by a ſpiritual guide, diſplaying in a ſeries of terrible viſions the ſecrets of Divine Juſtice, and whoſe interpoſition had been procured by the ſupplication of a Saint in Paradiſe, deeply intereſted in his eternal welfare.* Here is a cauſe, an effect, and the probable means by which this

effect

effect is produced ; the means are of a nature that rouſe the ſtrongeſt paſſions, *Terror* and *Pity*, and the effect is deeply and univerſally intereſting. 'Tis true, this plan does not admit of a train of connected incidents, nor a variety of action, ariſing from that oppoſition of intereſts and play of the paſſions, which muſt naturally ariſe in deſcribing the conſequence of the wrath of *Achilles*, but a uniform ſcene of ſlaughter muſt tire, though diverſified with all the various fortunes of the day, and all the jarring paſſions of Gods and men. The wrath of Achilles gives riſe to a ſcene of bloodſhed, and his reconciliation only gives occaſion to accumulated ruin.—Here then, in the province of deſcription, the *Florentine*, (I think) has the advantage. The different allotments of his criminals afford room for a wonderful variety of ſublime imagery, and the adaptation of their puniſhments to their crimes, gives a noble opportunity for the exertions of fancy. The *machinery*, or the part

that

that ſpiritual agents are employed in, is to us, the leaſt intereſting part in both Homer's Poems; but the machinery of Dante, though leſs diverſified, is much more ſolemn and affecting: It coincides with the rational belief of the enlightened mind, and no leſs with the ſuperſtition of the vulgar; and we may juſtly obſerve, in the words of the firſt critic of his age, that with reſpect to *him*, as well as *Milton*, * "*the probable is marvelous, and the marvelous is probable.*"

By the complication and oppoſition of intereſts which muſt ariſe in an action fit for the ſubject of Epic Poetry, the human *character* muſt appear in the ſtrongeſt and moſt affecting points of view, as well as in the greateſt variety of ſituations, yet in the courſe of a martial enterpriſe, among a people uncivilized and rude, thoſe proſpects muſt be rather ſimilar, and this variety very much confined.—It muſt indeed be confeſſed that the mo-

* See JOHNSON's Life of MILTON.

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dern Poet, from the nature of his plan, was obliged to ſhew all his characters either in the circumſtance of actual ſuffering, or in dread of ſuffering:—Yet, it muſt be obſerved, that in the *Iliad* we only ſee the Heroes of antient times, as they appear to each other in public, in the buſtle of a camp, or the heat of a diſpute. It is not ſo in the *Inferno*. By *Dante* we are indulged with a nearer and more inward view of the *man*, as he really is, or in other words, as his character appears in the eye of offended and omniſcient juſtice. In Homer our proſpect is confined to one walk of life, one ſpecies of action, one heroic age, in many circumſtances very remote from our preſent modes of acting and thinking. We are entirely, (I ſpeak of the *Iliad*) confined to the camp, the counſel, and the field of battle. This unity of time and place, 'tis true, gives an opportunity to the bard of ennobling a very ſhort period, or a very limited ſcene, with a great variety of

 incidents,

incidents, all connected together, and the more probable ſuch incidents are, the greater tribute we pay his genius. But this is rather inventing incidents than delineating characters; for in ſuch an action as the Iliad, the characters muſt be pretty much the ſame, or they will at leaſt be diſtinguiſhed by *traits* of a very minute kind. But the greater the variety of characters delineated in any Poem, the genius of the author, tho' perhaps leſs cultivated, muſt be allowed to be more exuberant.——*Dante's* plan, like Shakeſpeare's, allowed him the liberty of expatiating in the walks of public and private life, and of antient and modern times: He introduces indiſcriminately the Stateſman and the Hero, the Lover and the Sage, the Publican and the Prelate. This, indeed, ſometimes leads him into whimſical aſſociations, as when he gives a view of Sinon, the betrayer of *Troy*, and the wife of Potiphar, in the ſame bed together, under the influence

influence of an incurable and malignant diſeaſe.

But the moſt daring flights of fancy, the moſt accurate delineations of character, and the moſt artful conduct of fable, are not, even when combined together, ſufficient of themſelves to make a poem intereſting.

Non ſatis eſt pulchra eſſe poemata DULCIA *ſunto.*

HOR.

The Greeks and Trojans may purſue their quarrel by fraud and force, and various incidents mark the fortune of the day: the diſcord of ACHILLES and AGAMEMNON may produce the moſt tragical conſequences; but if we, who are cool and impartial in the affair, neither hurried by paſſion nor blinded by intereſt, cannot enter warmly into the views of either party, the ſtory, though adorned with all the genius of an Homer, will be read by

us with ſome degree of *nonchalance*. The ſuperſtition that led the Cruſaders to reſcue the Holy Land from the Infidels, inſtead of intereſting us, appears frigid, if not ridiculous. We cannot be much concerned for the fate of ſuch a crew of fanatics, notwithſtanding the magic numbers of a Taſſo. The exploded machinery of Demons and Magicians, which he was obliged to uſe, ſhows what miſerable reſources he was reduced to, in order to give ſo ill-choſen a ſtory any hold upon the imagination; an hold which, by means of that very machinery, he ſooneſt loſt.—But there muſt be ſomething to intereſt the heart:—we cannot ſympathiſe with Achilles for the loſs of his Miſtreſs, when we feel that he gained her by the maſſacre of her family:—and when, in the very middle of his complaint, he owns that he brought deſtruction upon the Trojans without any manner of provocation.

No hoſtile troops to *Phthia's* realms they led;
Safe in her vales my warlike courſers fed;
Far hence remov'd, the hoarſe reſounding main,
And walls of rock, ſecur'd my native reign:
Hither we ſail'd, a voluntary throng,
T' avenge a private, not a public wrong.

POPE'S HOMER, *B. I.*

When a man, where no intereſt is concerned, no provocation given, lays a whole nation in blood merely for his *glory*; we, to whom his glory is indifferent, cannot enter into his reſentment.—Beſides, ſuppoſing we could, he carries his reſentment too far.—With theſe paſſions of the cruel and unſocial kind, we cannot ſympathiſe; they repel the mind, and fill it with abhorrence inſtead of attracting it. Such may be good poetical characters, of that mixt kind that Ariſtotle admits; but the moſt beautiful mixture of light and ſhade has no attraction, unleſs it warms the heart. It

muſt

muſt have ſomething that engages the ſympathy, ſomething that appeals to the *moral ſenſe*; for nothing can thoroughly captivate the fancy, however artfully delineated, that does not awake the ſympathy and intereſt the paſſions that enliſt on the ſide of Virtue, and appeal to our native notions of right and wrong. All fables of another kind, where this intereſt is diſregarded,

——— Play round the head, but never touch the heart.

It is this that ſets the *Odyſſey*, in point of ſentiment, ſo far above the *Iliad*. We feel the injuries of Ulyſſes; we enter thoroughly into his reſentments againſt men, who had treated him with the higheſt injuſtice, ingratitude, and perfidy; men who had taken advantage of his long abſence to invade his property and attempt to injure him in the tendereſt point. We are not only intereſted for

for the Father, but we ſeem to feel the generous indignation of the young *Telemachus*, and we tremble at the dangers of the fair *Penelope*. We do not think any puniſhment too ſevere for ſuch a complication of cruelty, effeminacy, and injuſtice, as appears in the character of the ſuitors of Penelope: we can go along with the reſentment of Ulyſſes, becauſe it is juſt, but our *feelings* muſt tell us that *Achilles* carries his reſentment to a ſavage length, a length where we cannot follow him; the conſequences ſhow us the fatal effects of diſcord. But, as both parties are equally engaged in the commiſſion of injuries, an unprejudiced reader cannot enter into the reſentment of either.

Iliacos extra muros peccatur; et intra.

It is a conteſt between barbarians, equally guilty of injuſtice, rapine, and bloodſhed; and we are not

not ſorry to ſee the vengeance of Heaven equally inflicted on both parties.

Æneas indeed is a more amiable perſonage than Achilles; he ſeems meant for a perfect character. But compare his conduct with reſpect to Dido with the ſelf-denial of Dryden's *Cleomenes*, or with the conduct of *Titus* in the *Berenice* of *Racine*, we will then ſee what is meant by making a character *intereſting*. We will at the ſame time ſee the different ideas of moral perfection which we entertain *now*, and require in an intereſting character, in compariſon to what was neceſſary in former times. Æneas, by the connivance of the Gods, leads the hoſpitable Queen of Carthage into guilt, and, by the command of the Gods, *piouſly* leaves her to ruin and deſpair.

Titus has indulged a long paſſion for Berenice, which ſhe returns with mutual ardour; but ſuſpecting

pecting that the Romans, though ſubjected to the yoke, would never bear the dominion of a *Queen*, educated in all the deſpotic principles of the Eaſt, he reſigns his paſſion to their innate abhorrence of royalty, and diſmiſſes the diſtracted princeſs, after a long ſtruggle between love and patriotiſm.

Here we thoroughly ſympathiſe with the Hero; we feel for him; and, though we are ſenſible that in ſuch a conteſt we ſhould hardly have come off victors, yet, as our paſſions are not bribed to be of either party, our impartial ſenſe of *duty* applauds the patriotiſm of the Emperor:—and here it is remarkable, that the ſame impartiality that I may ſay intereſts us *againſt* the character of Achilles and Agamemnon, intereſts us *for* the character of *Titus* and *Telemachus*.

Let us compare the character of Æneas with that of the laſt-named hero, and we will find, that,

that, however inferior the poem of *Telemaque* may be to the other, in point of invention and ſublimity, yet, in the latter, the nobleſt uſe of poetry is diſplayed. A character, at the ſame time amiable and heroic, is ſhown to be conſiſtent and beautiful; we are intereſted in the fate of a Prince whom we muſt love, and the *paſſions* are engaged on the ſide of *virtue*.

But, as to the effect of all theſe poems on the heart, they are partial and confined, when compared to the INFERNO, with reſpect to the original principles of our nature on which they are founded, or the ſentiments to which they appeal.

The *Iliad* could be intereſting in a proper degree only to a *Greek*; and that ſo far only as it tended to awake his ſenſe of national glory. The *Æneid* could only be intereſting to a native of *Rome*. —But wherever the abhorrence of vice, the natural

love

love of virtue and juſtice, and the notion of a moral Governor of the Univerſe prevails; wherever the notion of Providence is found; wherever the perſuaſion of the immortality of the ſoul and divine juſtice predominates; wherever the power of conſcience, and the idea of right and wrong and of future rewards and puniſhments governs the human breaſt; there the poem of the *Inferno* can never fail to intereſt. Theſe notions to us have all the appearance of innate principles, of ideas born with us, becauſe they are by inſtruction introduced ſo early in the mind that we do not recollect their origin: becauſe they are familiar, they are too little conſidered; and by want of conſideration, their effect is leſſened. It will not therefore, I hope, be thought inconſiſtent with the preſent ſubject to give ſome account how theſe ſentiments riſe in the mind, as ſuch an inquiry will be found neceſſary to give the preſent poem its full effect. To ſome, this inveſtigation

may

may be uſeful on its own account; others to whom it is familiar will allow us to plead the precept and example of a late eminent writer*, who, when he was obliged to go over the beaten ground of the *feudal ſyſtem*, in order to explain the national hiſtory, defended himſelf by obſerving, "That every thing neceſſary to illuſtrate a ſubject ſo important, ought not to be looked for elſewhere, but be found in the book itſelf."

When a man conſults his own feelings, he will find vice deteſtable in its own nature. He will find himſelf armed with an inſtinctive reſentment againſt injuries of every kind; even before he takes time to reflect on the idea of a legiſlator, or the pernicious conſequence of vice to ſociety in general. When Moraliſts, inſtead of appealing to our original ſentiments for our diſapprobation of vice and injuſtice, expatiate coolly on their bad

* Hume.

influence

influence on ſociety, and leave out the conſideration of their native turpitude, it has this bad effect at leaſt, that it gives encouragement to reaſoners of a certain caſt to argue, from topics ſpecious enough, that *private vices* are *public benefits*; a doctrine which never could have got footing, if, with the conſequences of vice upon a nation at large, we had always paid a proper attention to the real deformity of its nature and the hatred it inſpired. Antecedent to and independent of all laws, a man may learn to argue on the nature of moral obligation, and the duty of univerſal benevolence, from *Cumberland*, *Wollaſton*, *Shafteſbury*, *Hutcheſon*; he may learn from them the balance of the paſſions, and the difference between thoſe of the ſocial and unſocial kind;—but, would he *feel* what vice is in itſelf; would he learn the genuine ſentiments of nature upon it; would he ſee the beſt natural comment upon the Decalogue; let him enter into the paſſions of *Lear*, when he feels

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the ingratitude of his children; of *Hamlet*, when he learns the ſtory of his father's murder; of *Othello*, when he ſhudders at *Iago*'s tale; of *Chamont*, when he burns with honourable indignation at a ſiſter's wrongs; let him feel what *Hermione* or *Edgar* felt, when ſinking under the weight of a falſe acuſation; let him reflect on the ſentiments of thoſe, who ſuffered by the ambition of *Richard*, the avarice of *Shyloc*, or the cruelty and luſt of Bajazet; and he will know the difference of right and wrong much more clearly than from all the moraliſts that ever wrote.

That there is a real difference between moral good and evil, between virtue and vice, appears from this; that, in reality, the difference of virtue and vice is founded by nature on the difference of natural good and evil: and it is for want of attending to the iſſues and conſequences of things, that men are ever guilty of making a miſ-

take

take.—Why is prodigality a vice? Becauſe it deprives me of competence, a natural good, and reduces me to poverty, a natural evil. The ſame connexion holds good between every virtue and every inſtance of happineſs, every vice and every inſtance of miſery; whatever tends truly and univerſally to the perfection of human nature, to the general happineſs of mankind, is *moral* good as well as natural, and *moral Evil* is that which corrupts, depraves, and diſhonours our nature, and renders it truly miſerable. But what deceives and impoſes upon men is, becauſe they do not always ſee natural evil the immediate conſequence of vice; but, though remote, it is not the leſs certain and neceſſary;—if we don't feel the conſequences of our guilt here, ſome other perſon muſt; and if *we* have the feeling of human nature, HIS reſentments ought to ſhew us the turpitude of the crime.—The wickedeſt of men do themſelves give teſtimony to the truth of this general

neral propoſition, that there is originally, in the very nature of things, a neceſſary and eternal difference between Good and Evil, Virtue and Vice, which the nature of things themſelves oblige men to have a conſtant regard to; but, with reſpect to worldly proſperity, things *ſeem* not to be diſtributed according to the ſtrict rules of juſtice in this ſublunary ſtate. We ſee proſperity the general conſequence of vigilance, induſtry, and prudence; virtues which are as often practiſed by the bad as the good: the wicked man reaps the fruits of his induſtry, the indolent man pays the forfeſt of his ſloth. Juſtice and the courſe of this world require, that riches ſhould be the reward of prudence and its concomitant virtues. For, let us conſider what would be the conſequence, if matters were otherwiſe ordered:—a bad man orders his affairs with conſummate prudence and foreſight; perhaps he has been guilty of injuſtice or oppreſſion in the acquiſition, for this he becomes

the

the object of heavenly vengeance here; and what is the conſequence? Notwithſtanding all his vigilance, his deſigns are uniformly blaſted, and his affairs fall to ruin. The ruin muſt in this caſe be general; for even the good who are connected with him, or who in the courſe of affairs would be ſupplied by his abundance, muſt ſuffer by his loſſes, and even his own innocent family muſt ſuffer with him.

It is juſt therefore, that prudence and its concomitant virtues, which can be practiſed as well by the bad as the good, ſhould uniformly be rewarded *here*. The induſtrious knave cultivates the ſoil; the indolent good man leaves it uncultivated. Who ought to reap the harveſt? who ought to ſtarve? who live in plenty? The natural courſe of things decides in favour of the villain; the natural ſentiments of men in favour of the man of virtue. When violence and artifice, con-

ducted by prudence and fore-thought, prevail over ſincerity and juſtice attended with a leſs degree of vigilance, what indignation it raiſes in the breaſt of man! His natural equity induces him to ſtrive to correct it by the interference of law and the ſanction of puniſhment; and when we deſpair of finding upon earth any forcible means to check the triumphs of injuſtice, we naturally appeal to Heaven. We are convinced, that the Great Author of Nature will execute, hereafter, what the moral principles he has given us prompt us to attempt, even here, by the interpoſition of laws. We truſt, that he will complete the plan which he himſelf has thus taught us to begin; and, in a life to come, render to every one according to the works which he has done in this world. Thus we are led to the belief of a *Future State*; not alone by our weakneſs, not alone by the hopes of life and the fears of annihilation implanted in human nature, but by the nobleſt and beſt

beſt principles that belong to it; by the love of virtue, and the abhorrence of vice and injuſtice.

It is not neceſſary here to examine the different opinions of antient authors on the immortality of the Soul. The natural evidence in this caſe is not ſo much to be eſtimated by the different abilities of the writers, as by the common ſenſe of mankind. This, and all other opinions, which, derive themſelves from the light of nature, owe their authority, not to the abſtracted reaſoning of any ſchool, but to ſome general ſenſe or notion which is to be found in all men, or to ſome common and uncontroverted maxim of reaſon. Unbelievers have often abuſed their time and pains by confronting the teſtimonies of antient Philoſophers, and ſhewing their inconſiſtencies on this point.——But what if PLATO, ARISTOTLE, or TULLY are inconſiſtent with each other, and with themſelves?——What is this to the evidence of

nature, which is not the ſingle opinion of PLATO, or any other Philoſopher, but the united voice of mankind?—This was the common belief of the world, derived from ſome common ſenſe or principle of reaſon, before any philoſopher had ſo much as thought of an abſtract reaſon for it: And had not the univerſal ſenſe of nature, or early tradition, dictated the truth to them, people never would have thought of philoſophizing upon it. That the common ſenſe of mankind, whether founded on tradition or reaſon, was the foundation of the philoſophical enquiry, appears from this, that all the antient writers on this ſubject appeal to the common ſenſe, and conſent of mankind, as one great proof for the truth of this doctrine; which certainly proves this, at leaſt, that this opinion was held before there were any writers, and before any philoſophical reaſons were thought of. If the notion was common, it never could

have

have riſen from philoſophical reaſoning, for no common opinion ever will, nor ever did; and the reaſon is plain; a common opinion is the opinion of the multitude, who never were, nor ever will be, capable of attending to abſtracted reaſoning: Now this natural evidence is the thing which we enquire after, and which will ſtand its ground whatever comes of the notions of learned men.

The belief and perſuaſion of the certainty of another life (as was obſerved before) aroſe from the common ſenſe that men have of the difference of good and evil; and thence, that under the government of a juſt God, every man muſt be accountable for the things done in this world. This account they ſaw was not taken *here*; hence they concluded, or rather *felt*, from the very force of reaſon and conſcience, or from their ſenſe of juſtice, that there

there was an account to be given *hereafter*. Such an internal argument as this, which ſprings up in the heart, and from the heart of every man, has a greater weight with it, than all the reaſonings of philoſophy put together, and will tie men down, if not to hope for, at leaſt to *fear*, a future immortality; any of which is the ſilent voice of nature, bearing teſtimony of a life to come.

That this is the true foundation of the univerſal belief of a future Life, appears from this, that the perſuaſion of another Life was always connected with a ſuppoſition that there were different ſtates for good and bad men, ſo that we cannot any where trace the notion of immortality; but we find evidence alſo for the different conditions of men in another Life according as they have behaved in this. Now, theſe

two

two opinions being thus inſeparably connected, it is eaſy to ſee which is the natural and primary opinion, and which is the conſequence drawn from it. Let any man try, and he will find, that it is not the expectation of *Living* that makes him infer the neceſſity of a Judgment to come, but it is the nobleſt principle of his nature, the Love of Virtue, and the Abhorrence of Vice and Injuſtice, which makes him ſee the reaſonableneſs of a *Judgment* to come, and from thence he infers that there muſt be a *Life* to come.

To what an amazing growth this nation encreaſed in the hands of Poets, and of DANTE in particular, is well known: They named the Princes and the Judges, and deſcribed the tortures of the wicked as their fancies led them, and their inventions became the Vulgar Theology;

logy; but this ſhews the truth of what is aſſerted above; for neither would the Poets, whoſe buſineſs it is to raiſe fine ſcenes upon the plan and probability of nature, have ſo painted the torments and enjoyments of men departed, nor would the world have received their inventions, had there not been a foundation in the natural notions of men to ſupport the Romance.

As to thoſe who think the notion of a future Life aroſe from the deſcriptions and inventions of the Poets, they may juſt as well ſuppoſe that eating and drinking had the ſame original, and that men had never thought of ſuſtaining nature, but for the fine feaſts and entertainments deſcribed in ſuch writers. The Poets indeed altered the genuine ſentiments of nature, and tinged the Light of Reaſon by introducing the wild conceits of Fancy, and when once they had

grafted

grafted ſuch ſcions on the ſtock of nature, they throve ſo faſt, and grew ſo rank, that the natural branches were deprived of their nouriſhment, by the luxuriance of this wild Olive. But ſtill the root was natural, though the fruit was wild. All that nature teaches is, that there is a future life, diſtinguiſhed into different ſtates of happineſs and miſery, in which men will be rewarded and puniſhed according as they have purſued or neglected the rules of virtue and honour. This notion prevailed where the Fables of *Greece*, or *Italy*, were never heard of; and wicked men felt in themſelves the fear of the wrath to come to, although they had never ſo much as learnt the name of TANTALUS, or SISYPHUS, or any other name, in the Poet's ſcene of Hell.

The natural evidence then of Life and Immortality ſtand equally clear of being the inventions

ventions of Poetry, or the mere ſubtlety and refinements of Philoſophy, and though it be allied to both, yet it aroſe from neither. The truth of the caſe, with reſpect to both, is this: The Poets found men in poſſeſſion of the doctrine of future rewards and puniſhments for good and bad men: Upon this foundation they went to work, and the plain draught of nature was almoſt hid under the ſhades and colours with which they thought proper to beautify and adorn it. The Philoſophers found the ſame perſuaſion in themſelves and others, and as their profeſſion led them, ſearched out for phyſical reaſons to ſupport the cauſe. This enquiry has furniſhed us with the various opinions of antiquity, as to the nature and operation of the ſoul, its manner of acting in the body, and out of it, its eternity and immortality, and ſeveral other curious pieces of learning. How far any or all of theſe Enquirers ſucceeded in proving the Immortality of the Soul,

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from phyſical cauſes, is a matter that does not fall within the preſent ſubject. As to the preſent point, it is plain, that the natural evidence is not at all affected by their ſucceſs, be it what it will; for the natural evidence is prior to their enquiries, and ſtands upon another foot, upon the common ſenſe and apprehenſion of mankind.----The ſchools may determine the Soul to be Fire, or Air, or Harmony, or what elſe they pleaſe, yet, ſtill, nature will make every man feel, that the Grave will not ſecure him from appearing before the great Tribunal to which he is accountable.

But beſides our innate love of Virtue, and hatred of Injuſtice, there are other principles in our nature which perpetually inculcate theſe things upon us, and to which all writers, who have launched into views of futurity, make their conſtant appeal, that ſhame and remorſe

which

which attend on guilt, and which ariſe from natural impreſſions on the mind of man. It is certain from experience, that we can no more direct by our choice the *reflections* of our minds, than we can the ſenſations of the body. When the fire burns fleſh and blood muſt feel pain, and a rational mind, compelled to act againſt its own convictions, muſt ever grieve and be afflicted; thoſe natural connexions are unalterably fixed by the Author of Nature, and eſtabliſhed to be the means of our preſervation. We are taught by the ſenſe of pain to avoid things hurtful or deſtructive to the body — and the torment and anxiety of mind which follow ſo cloſe upon the heels of Sin and Guilt, are placed as Guardians on our Innocence, as Centinels, to give us as early notice of the approach of Evil, which threaten the peace and comfort of our Lives. If we be perfect maſters of the ſenſations of our minds, if reflection be ſo much

under

under our command, that when we ſay "come," it cometh; when we ſay, "go," it goeth; how does it come to paſs that ſo many ſuffer from the uneaſy thoughts and ſuggeſtions of their own hearts, when they have nothing to do but diſmiſs theſe troubleſome viſitants when they pleaſe? Whence comes the ſelf-conviction, the ſelf-condemnation of the vicious? Whence the foreboding thoughts of Judgment to come, the ſad expectations of Divine vengeance, and the dread of future miſery, if the criminal has it in his power to bid thoſe melancholy thoughts retire, and can when he pleaſes, ſit down enjoying his iniquities in peace and tranquility?----Theſe conſiderations make it evident that the pain and grief of mind which we ſuffer from a ſenſe of having done ill, flow from the very conſtitution of our nature, as we are Rational Agents; nor can we conceive any ſtronger arguments of the utter irreconcileableneſs of the Deity to vice, than that he has

given

given us ſuch a nature that we cannot be reconciled to it ourſelves---we never like it in others, where we have no intereſt in the crime, nor long approve of it ourſelves where we have. The hours of cool reflection are the mortification of the guilty man, for vice never can be happy in the company of Reaſon.

To return from this long digreſſion; the paſſions which the ILIAD and ÆNEID appeal to are tranſient and variable; they are not felt in an equal degree by all, and by ſome hardly perceived. The operations of anger and indignation, hope, and fear, ſympathy and pity, are violent, but ſhort lived, and the Poets who have endeavoured to keep theſe ſentiments longer alive by art, than nature has permitted, only make themſelves ridiculous, and gain to their compoſitions the name of *Bombaſt*. But when the effect of a Poem, depends upon principles extenſive as human

man nature, ſentiments to be found in every breaſt, in a more or leſs degree, whoſe influence is invariable and permanent, that Poem, if it riſes at all above mediocrity, ſhould, methinks, ſecure an univerſal reception.----The ſenſe of right and wrong, that innate love of virtue and juſtice, and the influence of conſcience, are principles which every where prevail. Theſe are the principles on which the Poem of the INFERNO is founded, and to which they conſtantly refer; beſides this, it abounds with powerful appeals to the ſtrongeſt of all human paſſions, Terror and Pity; we ſympathize with the ſufferers, as they are neither Demons nor imaginary beings, but our fellow creatures; and the combined force of all theſe ſentiments and principles, the hatred of vice, the power of conſcience, and our pity to the victims, muſt produce the moſt ſalutary of all effects, that moral effect, which all Laws tend to produce, a juſt idea of the

conſequence

conſequence of Vice to ourſelves. There is another reaſon, which gives the deſcriptions and tales of the INFERNO a ſtill ſtronger influence. The modes of life deſcribed in the antient heroic Poets, though they exhibit all the ſimplicity of nature, are ſtill remote from ours. Military operations, ſince Chriſtianity prevailed, are not attended with the ſame dreadful and exterminating effects as formerly: The ſcenes of war are at a vaſt diſtance from moſt of us, and the whole aſpect of it is changed. The deſcription of domeſtic life, different in many reſpects from ours, cannot have the ſame effect on the heart; the proſpects of bloody extermination and cruel ſlavery, with the ſavage, and to us, unnatural ſentiments with which they are often attended, muſt ſtrike us indeed with horror, but they muſt fill us with averſion at the ſame time; at leaſt, we cannot ſympathize ſo warmly with one of HOMER's *Grecian* Heroes, as one of SHAKESPEARE's *Engliſh Barons*; we do

not

not feel for an HECTOR as we do for an HOTSPUR. The character of the latter Hero and CORIOLANUS, is very ſimilar, yet, I believe, every *Engliſhman* is more warmly intereſted for a PERCY, than any old *Roman*; nay, of two beggars, one craves our charity in the accent of a diſtant province, his tones are ſo diſcordant to the *recitative*, to which our ears are accuſtomed, that it checks the genial current of our charity, and we relieve him more from principle than inclination; the other, whoſe ſupplications are uttered in a voice more uniſon with the vocal harmony which has been long familiar to us, has a much better chance of intereſting our feelings at once; ſuch is the different ſucceſs of two Poets, one of which repreſent antient, the other, modern manners; the modes of Life, and even the opinions which we meet with in DANTE, are all, if not familiar to us, at leaſt allied to our own by a very near affinity, our manners of life and opinions are

drawn from the ſame ſource, moſt of his characters profeſs the ſame faith with us, and exhibit nearly the ſame manners; hence we feel for them the more ſtrongly. It may be thought that there are too many appeals made to the powerful emotions of the ſoul, terror and pity. This ariſes principally from the want of art in the compoſition: But the variety of his deſcriptions make an ample compenſation for the uniformity of his ſubject. Every thing that is terrible to human nature is there brought to view in ſucceſſion, his corporal ſufferings are variegated with more imagination, and deſcribed with more ſublimity than any other Poet, not excepting MILTON, who drew ſome of his moſt tremendous ſcenes evidently from DANTE; ſome are hurried round in perpetual motion, ſome are immoveably fixed under their torments, ſituations which intereſt our feelings the more ſtrongly, as they are both ſo ſtrikingly remote from the common appearances of Life:

But

But had he confined himſelf to corporal ſufferings alone, he had only deſerved to rank with thoſe bards———

"Where pure deſcription holds the place of ſenſe."

He has alſo ſhewn the ſufferings of the mind, with a force of genius that ſhews him to have been an accurate and profound obſerver of the human character. Some deprecate the wrath of Heaven in effeminate lamentations, ſome ſuffer in manly ſilence, in ſome we meet an expreſſion of malignant envy, and ſome, ſtruck with ſhame, endeavour to conceal their crimes and and their woes in eternal oblivion, ſome have their ſympathy, their envy, or their terror continually kept awake by ſupernatural repreſentations of whatever was to happen among their friends on earth. The very introduction of a living man among them, who, exempt from their ſufferings, views all their tor-

ments at leiſure, ſerves to ſublime their pains for a time. In ſhort, the paſſions are repreſented as having their full play in the infernal Regions, and add new horror to the ſcene. But, not content to avail himſelf of the Platonic doctrine of the paſſions and vices ſurviving after death, whoſe effects he deſcribed (ſometimes allegorically) with a wonderful force of fancy, he has alſo adopted the *Pythagorean* doctrine of the Tranſmigration of Souls: By this means he has contrived to blend the torments of the mind and body in one horrible deſcription (25) where the ſufferings of the victims are encreaſed by their being (while ſtill conſcious of their ſuperior nature) changed into deteſtable and portentous ſhapes. This, Mr. WARTON thinks, he borrowed from the Fable of CIRCE; it probably is meant only an allegorical deſcription of the pangs of mind ariſing from conſciouſneſs of having degraded their nature, and defeated the deſign of their being. MILTON has

has founded one of his moſt ſtriking ſcenes upon it. (B. x.) and very much improved it by adding to it the *tantalizing* appearance of the forbidden fruit. He has alſo entered more into the *ſentiment* of the criminals, he has deſcribed their *feelings* more at large, and made their ſufferings more complex. It is remarkable to obſerve the different modes of deſcribing future things adopted by different Poets in their reſpective ages. Homer, and the Greek Poets give us very little more than an idea of corporeal ſufferings, except in the ſtory of TANTALUS. Virgil has availed himſelf of the Platonic opinions, (viz: that the effects of indulged paſſions ſurvive after death) to join to the ſimple ſketch of his maſter, a detail of the ſufferings of the mind, particularly in his deſcription of the ſcene where the ſhade of DIDO meets ÆNEAS, his deſcription of the viſionary feaſt, and the eternal dread of THESEUS. DANTE was the next Poet of character who undertook this ſubject; the clearer notions

notions of morality which he drew from the Chriſtian Religion, enabled him to give his fancy a wider range, and to diſplay on a larger ſcale, not only the ſufferings of the body, but of the mind. In MILTON their puniſhments are ſtill more complicated than in DANTE. It appears from this ſummary view, not that DANTE has extended his puniſhments beyond the ſtrict rules of diſtributive juſtice, but that in the progreſs of ſociety as the notions of moral obligation became more clear, the powers of conſcience grew more vigorous, and that as the ſcale of duty grew enlarged from man's innate love to juſtice, the idea of puniſhment for the reſpective failures in duty, muſt have become more complicated. From this idea the puniſhments of Sodom and Gomorrah are repreſented as more tolerable than the doom of Capernaum; and various degrees of puniſhment are mentioned as proportioned to different ſpecies of delinquency. We are not therefore

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to attribute that tremendous diſtinction of puniſhments we find in DANTE, merely to the wanton exaggerations of fancy, or the gloomy reveries of ſuperſtition; but to an enlarged view of the variety of obligations reſulting from an high ſtate of civilization, and clearer notions of Religion. That rule of duty, to "do unto others as we would they ſhould do unto us," in a ſtate of ſavage life, can extend itſelf but to a few particulars; but in a more advanced ſtate of ſociety, tho' the rule itſelf remains ſtill ſimple, yet from the variety of relations which men ſtand in to each other, *there* it muſt be applied to a greater variety of good offices, and the temptations to the breach of them muſt be more numerous.

In this endeavour to illuſtrate the Poem of the INFERNO, and trace to their ſource the impreſſions it makes on us, I have been obliged to caſt a veil on

on the venerable Father of *Grecian* Poetry, yet, I hope it will not be thought owing to want of either Reſpect or Love.—It was in ſome ſort neceſſary to ſhew DANTE in his proper light. HOMER and VIRGIL have all the advantages of Nature and Art, they may eaſily allow to DANTE that ſingle one of appealing to Sentiments and Principles more general, and more permanent than their Poems refer to. MILTON, towards the end of his immortal Poem, ſhews the Sun and the whole Face of Nature under an Eclipſe, in order to give the greater effect to a glorious apparition of Angels which he here introduces. I would be underſtood to mean as little diſreſpect to

——" The ſolar Lord of the Poetic Year,

as MILTON did to the great Luminary: But all I meant was to ſhade his excellence a little, that

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a Bard of a ſecondary magnitude might have an opportunity of appearing in his proper light; this was the more neceſſary, as DANTE had fallen into a degree of obſcurity far below his genuine deſerts.

HISTORICAL

HISTORICAL ESSAY

OF THE

STATE OF AFFAIRS

IN THE

THIRTEENTH AND FOURTEENTH CENTURIES:

With Reſpect to the HISTORY *of* FLORENCE; *with a* VIEW *of their* INFLUENCE *on the ſucceeding* AGES.

MY firſt intention was only to have given a few Hiſtorical Illuſtrations at the end of the Tranſlation; but as the characters of the Poem do not appear in chronological order, and this period of Hiſtory is very intereſting in itſelf, I thought it would

would anſwer a better purpoſe to give a general idea of the State of Affairs at this important period, to which there are ſo many alluſions made in the *Inferno*.

This Æra preſents a very ſingular ſcene to the view. The complication of two of the moſt memorable quarrels that ever embroiled mankind, with a private family feud, gave riſe to that wonderful variety of characters exhibited by the Poet. A diſpute which had a remarkable influence on the genius, religion, and politics of ſucceeding ages. The moſt antient and inveterate of theſe conteſts was the Quarrel between the Popes and Emperors of *Germany*, concerning their reſpective claims: In *Italy* the Emperor claimed the old prerogatives of the CÆSARS: The Popes not only denied them theſe, but claimed in their turn, the moſt valuable Privilege of Imperial power in *Germany*. This was the power of diſpoſing of Eccleſiaſtical Benefices.

fices. From this old ſource of diſcord the diſpute between the Houſes of *Anjou* and *Swabia*, for the Crown of *Naples*, took its origin, and by a ſingular coincidence of circumſtances, both Quarrels were at laſt complicated with the inteſtine Wars of *Florence*, ſome time before the birth of DANTE.

It will be neceſſary to begin with the Papal and Imperial Feud, as it involved the other two, and was infinitely ſuperior to them both in the grandeur of its object, and the importance of its conſequences. The others are only to be conſidered in the light of Epiſodes to this great Drama.

In the removal of the ſeat of Empire from *Rome* to *Conſtantinople*, *Italy* was left in a very feeble and diſtracted ſtate. For a long ſucceſſion of ages, it was alternately ravaged by the Goths, the

the Huns, and the Sarazens. While the Greek Emperor preſerved a feeble Barrier in the Exarchate of *Ravenna*, which then contained a large tract of country on the eaſtern coaſt of *Italy*, the people of *Rome* began to look up to the Pope as a better Protector than a feeble Viceroy of a diſtant Potentate. Thence his temporal authority firſt took its riſe, and the following occaſion gave rapidity to its progreſs.

AISTULPHUS, the *Gothic* King of *Lombardy*, had invaded *Ravenna*, and threatened *Rome*. GREGORY, the third Pontiff of that name, alarmed at the dangerous neighbourhood, implored the aſſiſtance of PEPIN, King of *France*. PEPIN ſoon expelled the *Lombards* from *Ravenna*; but diſregarding the remonſtrances of the *Greek* Emperor, to whom it belonged, he made a preſent of the newly recovered Territory to GREGORY, who called it ROMAGNA. This was the firſt commencement

mencement of the Papal Grandeur, and might have been of the Imperial, if PEPIN, like CHARLEMAGNE, had availed himſelf of the opportunity. A league was made between the *Lombard* Prince and the Pontiff, under the auſpices of PEPIN. DESIDERIUS, who ſucceeded to the Crown of *Lombardy*, broke the League, and his Holineſs, who had now learnt to preſerve the Balance of Power, invited CHARLEMAGNE, King of *France*, into *Italy*, againſt DESIDERIUS. He defeated the *Lombard*, ſent him priſoner to *France*, and was crowned in his ſtead, not only King of *Lombardy*, but Emperor of *Rome*, *by the conſent of the People*; a Condition which the Pope did not then think proper to oppoſe. The imperial Crown gave *Charlemagne* a pretence to claim all the power of the old *Roman* Emperors, even in the Territories where the Pope thought himſelf Lord Paramount, and ſowed the ſeeds of eternal Diſcord between the two Powers. After the death of *Charlemagne*,

the

the Pope ſeemed to regain ſome privileges which he had loſt. A deſcendant of *Charlemagne* who ſucceeded to the Empire, contrary to the right of the legitimate Heir, acknowledged that the imperial Crown *was the gift of the Pontiff only*, and that he held every thing under him as Lord Paramount. Some of the Popes when they took the oaths to the deſcendants of *Charlemagne* declared it was only *voluntary*; others aſſumed the right of judging Emperors, and ſome took the advantage of family Feuds between different branches of the *Carlovingian* Line, to extend both their ſpiritual and temporal Power. They often took the Papal Chair without condeſcending to apply for the conſent of the Emperors, they obliged Kings to take back their repudiated wives, and extended their power, under various pretences, to a length truly amazing. But in time, not only the great *European* Potentates began to be jealous, but the Citizens of Rome, who ſtill retained ſome of their

Republican

Republican ſpirit, burning to regain their ancient Liberty, endeavoured to reſtrain the Papal Power within due bounds.—It was on this occaſion that the Pope invited the Emperor OTHO the third into *Italy*, who re-eſtabliſhed the Pontiff in his full power, and ſeconded his moſt arrogant claims. The intereſts of the Pope and Emperor happened then to be the ſame. Till this period the *Roman* people pleading their immemorial privileges, had a ſhare in the election of an Emperor, and it was certainly the intereſt of the Candidate to continue this Power to the *people*. But the Pope perſuaded OTHO, that it would be more for *his* intereſt to take away this power from the inſolent multitude, and depend for protection on ſpiritual aid alone. Againſt ſuch a Coalition of Intereſts the people of *Rome* were far unable to contend. Accordingly the two Potentates deprived them of their Franchiſe, and gave the right of Election to the Biſhops of *Mentz*, *Cologn*, *Triers*, and the Dukes

of Brandenburgh, the Palatinate, and *Saxony*. Amongſt theſe diſtant Potentates, the judicious Pontiff foreſaw, that he would have more Influence in the election of an Emperor than amongſt the Republicans of *Rome*; nor did the event deceive him. The intereſt of thoſe German Princes often clashed with the views of the Emperor, whoſe power was very limited, that the Pope found it eaſy at any time, to divert the attention of his Rival from *Italy* by domeſtic diſturbances; and as diſtance begets reverence, theſe Foreigners, from the barbarous ſuperſtition of the times, were more at the devotion of their ſpiritual Father, than the factious *Romans*; who, when all the world trembled at his fulminations, continually teized him with vexatious quarrels.

Thus were the ſeeds ſown of perpetual diſſenſions between the ſpiritual and temporal powers,

which

which filled all *Italy* with GUELFS and GHIBELLINES, the former attached to the Papal Party, the latter to the Emperors. GREGORY the ſeventh, the famous *Hildebrand*, made the moſt daring exertion of his power. He publiſhed a Bull, which deprived *all* Laymen of the power of inveſting or diſpoſing of Biſhoprics. This was ſtriking at the power of all Kings, and ſubjecting the Clergy, a potent body in every kingdom, to a foreign juriſdiction. The Emperor, Henry the fourth, took arms to vindicate his authority. The Conteſt was carried on with various ſucceſs for three centuries; a Conteſt, which after having produced the moſt important effects, ſeems not yet to have entirely ſubſided.

One of the firſt, and moſt illuſtrious conſequences, was the Liberty of FLORENCE; a city which, under the name of *Fæſulæ*, made a conſiderable figure in the times of the *Roman* Repub-

lic.—It was an early Colony from *Rome*, encreaſed by the army of SYLLA. Under *Brutus* it ſerved as a temporary Aſylum for Liberty, but ſoon followed the fate of the empire under *Auguſtus*. The new ſettlement made for the purpoſes of merchandiſe, from the mountains of *Fæſulæ*, on the banks of the *Arno*, is diſtinguiſhed by the name of *Florentia*, ſo early as the Times of *Tacitus* and *Pliny*. It continued to encreaſe in ſplendor till the ruin of the empire, when it was levelled to the ground by *Totila*, King of the *Goths*, and not rebuilt till the times of Charlemagne.—From that æra, this city, deſtined to be a ſecond *Athens* in arts and arms, tamely followed the fortunes of Italy. It was firſt the prey of the Sons of Charlemagne, then of the Kings of Lombardy, and laſtly of the German Emperors and Popes alternately, till, in the year 1215, the following memorable incident gave it an opportunity of aſſerting its independency.

The

The *Buendelmonti* and *Ubeſti* were the two moſt potent families in *Florence*. Next to theſe in power and influence were the *Donati* and *Amidei*. The Heireſs of the Family of *Donati* was the moſt celebrated beauty of that age, and her mother had ſecretly deſigned her for a young nobleman of the *Buondelmonte* family. She, however, delayed the proſecution of her deſign, in hopes of a favourable criſis, as her family was inferior to *Buondelmonte*. In thoſe days of whimſical punctilio and romantic honour, young Ladies lived in retirement, and *Buondelmonte* (as far as we can learn) never had ſeen this celebrated Fair One. Mean time, unconſcious of his deſtiny, he had paid his addreſſes to a young Lady of the family of *Amidei*, and was received as favourably as his exalted birth, fortune, and accompliſhments deſerved. In a ſhort time the contract was ſigned, and a day fixt for his nuptials. The family of *Amidei*, to whom this Lady belonged, were before allied

allied to the *Uberti*; they were now on the point of being united to the Race of *Buendelmonte*, families that engroſt all the power in *Florence*. Mortified to ſee her equals ſo far advanced above her, the mother of the fair DONATE ſecretly reſolved to make one effort to break off the concerted alliance.—One day, perceiving young *Buondelmonte*, in a thoughtful mood, paſſing her houſe, ſhe came to the door, and invited him to come in and repoſe himſelf. He obeyed the ſummons.

The diſcourſe turned on Matrimony; and the Dowager, pretending ignorance of the late tranſaction, gave him an obſcure intimation, of a Lady who entertained a ſecret paſſion for him: at the ſame time ſhe drew a picture of her charms, ſo flattering, that it warmed the fancy of the young Baron. Regardleſs of the conſequences, he reſolved to ſatisfy his dangerous curioſity, and eagerly enquired, if it was poſſible to procure an

interview with the Lady. The Mother, after ſome artful delay, contrived to give him an accidental view of her daughter; and, ſuch was the effect of her charms, or ſo feeble was his attachment to his betrothed ſpouſe, (as intereſt alone was probably concerned in the affair) that he ſoon forgot his vows, made a tender of his hand and fortune to his new Miſtreſs, and he and the Mother, being both apprehenſive of the danger of delay, perſuaded the young Lady to agree to a private and immediate ſolemnization of the nuptials.

The affair however could not long be kept ſecret. The day appointed for his public nuptials approached; and before that day he was obliged to declare his ſituation. The family of *Amidei* would have been too weak of themſelves to take vengeance on the perjured lover; but as they were joined in affinity to the *Uberti*, the old rivals

of

of *Buondelmonte*, they, and their numerous dependencies, were immediately ſummoned to a ſecret conſultation. Here ſeveral modes of vengeance were propoſed, but the ſcheme of * *Moſca Lambertucci* was preferred. He offered to waſh away the ſtain in the blood of the aggreſſor;—and in an inſtant an aſſaſſin from each family joined him, as if it had been a common cauſe. Before day, on *Eaſter Sunday*, they took their ſtations in the houſe of one of the *Amidei*, near the *Ponte Vecchio*, where they knew *Buondelmonte* muſt paſs, in his way to church. He, as *Machiavel* obſerves, "thinking it as eaſy to forget an injury as to "break a contract," approached the fatal ſpot on horſeback, wrapt up in the moſt unaccountable ſecurity, and without a ſingle attendant. The conſpirators immediately ruſhed out, and diſpatched him with a thouſand wounds.

* Inferno, C. 28.

This

This atrocious deed was the cauſe of the calamities and liberty of *Floronce*. The whole city was immediately divided into the factions of the *Buondelmonte* and *Uberti*; and every day was diſtinguiſhed by conſpiracies and bloodſhed, till *Frederic* the ſecond, who had lately ſucceeded to the imperial crown, paid a viſit to *Tuſcany*, to eſtabliſh his power againſt the papal faction, or *Guelfs*. For this purpoſe he demanded the aid of the *Uberte* family, as the moſt powerful in *Tuſcany*. *Buondelmonte* thirſting for vengeance on their domeſtic enemies, joined the *Guelfs*, and implored the aſſiſtance of the Pope: But the ſcale of *Frederic* preponderated, and the *Buondelmonte* family, with the whole papal faction, were baniſhed.

The Pope was juſtly alarmed. Since the time of *Charlemagne* no Emperor had poſſeſſed ſo much power in *Italy*: Beſides being at the head of the *Germanic* body, *Frederic* inherited the kingdoms

of

of *Naples* and *Sicily*, and thus his dominions made a formidable circle round the papal Territories, the ſouthern Provinces of *Italy*, deſcended to him from the *Norman* Conquerors, who had made a ſettlement there upon an occaſion unparalleled ſince the heroic times.

The beautiful Provinces of *Italy* to the ſouth had long been a ſubject of diſpute after the diviſion of the Empire, between the Emperors of the Eaſt and Weſt. While both were too weak to aſſert their claims, the *Saracens* or *Arabs* gained a footing in the country, and extended their ravages as far as *Rome*. *At this juncture a band of ſixty Norman Gentlemen coming through *Apulia*, on their return from the *Holy Land*, arrived at the town of *Salerno*, and found it on the point of ſurrendering to the Muſſelmen who

* Anno 983.

inveſted

inveſted it. The beſiegers gave theſe illuſtrious Pilgrims free permiſſion to enter the Town, as they wiſhed by increaſing their numbers to complicate their diſtreſs. The *Normans* reproached the *Italians* with their cowardice, and perſuading a few to join them in a ſally, fell upon the hoſt of the enemy by night, who forſook their Camp in a panic, and fled on board their ſhips. The Strangers were entertained by the Prince of *Salerno*, as the deliverers of the State: The fame of the Exploit ſoon invited other *Normans* to viſit *Italy*, and their ſervice was ſo acceptable to the petty Princes of the country, in their inceſſant quarrels, that thoſe needy adventurers ſoon obtained both riches and honour. A tract of land was beſtowed upon them as the reward of their valour, between the Dukedoms of *Naples* and *Benevento*, and there, about the year 1030, they founded the ſmall Principality of *Averſa*.

The

The Colony was every day enlarged by Troops of native *Normans*; among the reſt the three famous ſons of TANCRED of *Hauteville*, FIERABRAS, DEOGO, and HUMPHREY. Shortly after their arrival the * CATAPAN of *Apulia*, a Lieutenant of the Greek Emperor, requeſted their aſſiſtance to recover *Sicily* from the *Arabs*. They accordingly joined the *Greeks* in the invaſion of *Sicily*; and, in the firſt engagement FIERABRAS killed the Saracen General in ſingle combat. It is probable they would have inſtantly expelled the *Arabs* from the iſland, but the perfidious Greek defrauded the *Normans* of their ſtipulated reward, which was the fourth part of the prey. They in return ſummoned the *Apulians* to the ſtandard of Liberty, expelled the *Catapan*, and without conſulting either Pope or Emperor, erected it into a Dukedom for themſelves: Nor were the *Apulians*

* A barbarous GREEK Name, importing GOVERNOR-GENERAL.

averſe

averſe to change a feeble Deſpot for a gallant Protector.

Senſible however that they were not able to cope with their numerous foes, the Norman Dukes ſubmitted themſelves as feudatories to the Pope, and renounced all allegiance to the Emperor, whom they looked upon as too diſtant to protect them. The Pope in return gave ROBERT GUISCARD, the youngeſt ſon of TANCRED, a conſecrated Banner, and encouraged him to attempt the Conqueſt of *Sicily*. This they ſoon effected; and the Conquerors obtained from their ſpiritual Father, the important privilege of exerciſing *themſelves* the Legantine Power in their own dominions. When we conſider that the Legates were the Pope's PROCONSULS in every kingdom of Europe, and every where curbed the royal authority, we ſhall underſtand the juſt value of this conceſſion.

It

It was this Potentate, nurſt in the boſom of the Church, yet exempt from her power, who enabled GREGORY the ſeventh to humble the Emperor Henry the fourth, and ſubject the imperial Sceptre to the *Croſier*. The deſcendants of an obſcure *Norman* Adventurer, ſupported the pretenſions of the Church againſt the utmoſt effects of the imperial Power with various ſucceſs. The Popes ſometimes ſet up Anti-Emperors, and the Emperors Anti-Popes, while the people of Italy ſometimes joined one, ſometimes the other, as their intereſt led them; for the ſpirit of freedom ſtill ſubſiſted among them, and they wanted (as VOLTAIRE obſerves) to have "TWO maſters," that, in reality, they might have NONE.

But the *Norman* Vaſſals of the Church began at laſt to feel their own power, and grow intractable; and the Pope was obliged to call in another Potentate to preſerve the balance of *Italy*; he had

firſt

firſt called in the *French* and *Germans* againſt the *Lombards*, then the *Norman* Potentates were ſet up to balance the power of the *Germans*, but now when the Crown of *Sicily* was left without a male Heir, the Barons of *Naples* and *Sicily* favoured the Pretenſions of TANCRED, natural ſon to WILLIAM the laſt King of the *Norman* line, an enterpriſing young Prince, whoſe exaltation was a cauſe of terror to the Pope.—To prevent his ſucceſs, Pope CELESTINE the fourth, a Pontiff rather remarkable for cunning, than political ſagacity, encouraged young HENRY, Duke of *Swabia*, ſon to the Emperor BARBAROSSA, to marry CONSTANTINE, * a profeſt Nun, the only legitimate child of WILLIAM. She was obliged to relinquiſh her Monaſtery, and the Pope gave her abſolution for the breach of her vow; the condition of this

* Anno 1193.

marriage

marriage was the reſtitution of all the papal Domain which the *Normans* had ſeized, and the fruit of the alliance was a Son, who in right of his Mother ſucceeded to the kingdom of *Naples* and *Sicily*, and by the intereſt of the Houſe of *Swabia*, (to which he was heir) procured the imperial Crown by the name of FREDERIC the ſecond.—CELESTINE might have foreſeen this, but he hoped the intereſt of the Electors, and his own Intrigues, would have excluded the too powerful Houſe of *Swabia* from the Empire. In effect, he was able to keep FREDERIC out during two ſucceſſions: But at laſt, in the year 1214, he was inveſted with the imperial Robes, and being already heir of *Naples*, his dominions ſurrounded the papacy on all ſides.

In ſeveral States of *Italy*, particularly at *Rome*, a ſpirit of independence ſtill ſurvived; of this the Popes

Popes availed themſelves, and in every city eſtabliſhed a Guelf Faction againſt the Ghibellines, or Imperialiſts; but their power over the conſciences of men enabled them to ſpread their influence ſtill further. By this powerful engine the Pope could kindle the flames of Rebellion againſt his Antagoniſt, over all his vaſt dominions, and conſecrate Sedition by the name of Religion. When FREDERIC was on the point of reducing every thing to ſubjection on the banks of the TYBER, the Standard of Rebellion was ſuddenly raiſed on the ſhores of the RHINE, and he was obliged to relinquiſh the prize almoſt in reach. This was the tantalizing ſituation of almoſt all the *German* Emperors, but the intrigues of the Pope were in the end favourable to the cauſe of Liberty.—We have ſeen before how the Imperial Faction got the advantage at *Florence*, and baniſhed the *Buondelmonte* Family, with the whole Papal Faction. But on the death of FREDERIC a new family came to

the Imperial Throne, and the *Swabian* Race declined, the neutral party at *Florence* took the advantage of the favourable juncture, and propoſed a coalition of parties; the propoſal was agreed to, the baniſhed *Guelfs* were recalled, and an act paſſed of general amneſty. Then by a general agreement, the conſtitution was new modelled.—The city was divided into ſix diſtricts, governed by officers annually choſen; two Judges were appointed for criminal cauſes, and the whole defenſive force of the City and Country was divided into ninety-ſix regiments, whoſe ſuperior officers were alſo changed annually:—Theſe were ſoon fit for ſervice. The influence of the *Guelfs* prevailed, and extended their Conqueſts over *Piſtoia*, *Siena*, and *Arezzo*, which had been under the imperial Faction. In conſequence of theſe advantages the *Guelfs* began to grow haughty, and the *Ghibellines* envious; *their* power had fallen very low, for they were looked upon all over *Tuſcany*

as

as the abettors of *Tramontane* Tyranny. But an opportunity ſoon offered of gaining the aſcendant: CONRAD, ſon of FREDERIC the ſecond, died, and left an infant ſon, CONRADIN, the unfortunate heir of *Naples*, under the tuition of MANFRED, or MANFROY, a natural ſon to *Frederic* the ſecond. The Empire being elective had now gone into another family, and CONRADIN had nothing left but his hereditary dominion of *Swabia*, and the title to the Kingdom of *Naples*. But MANFRED, his Guardian, took advantage of his Pupil's non-age, uſurped the Crown of *Sicily*, and inheriting the inveterate hatred of the Houſe of *Swabia* againſt the Pope, he renewed his claim to the lands which the Emperor HENRY the ſixth had reſigned to the Pope on his marriage with CONSTANCE. At this criſis *Manfred* was in arms againſt the Pope, and re-animated the hopes of the

the *Ghibellines* ‡ all over *Italy*. The Imperial Faction in *Florence*, diſcountenanced and robbed of their ſhare in the Government, applied to him for aſſiſtance. The Counſel was given by * *Farinata Uberti*, the inveterate Enemy of the *Buondelmontes* race; but their practices were diſcovered by the vigilance of the magiſtrates, and the delinquents cited before the counſel. The *Uberti* took arms and fortified their houſes: But the enraged populace attached to the *Guelfs*, and to Liberty, took the part of their benefactors, and the *Ghibellines* were obliged to ſeek an aſylum at *Siena*.—This Republic had revolted from the Confederacy of the *Florentines*, and received the exiles readily. A Courier was inſtantly diſpatched to the

‡ Though the imperial power had now fallen very low, ſeveral Princes in Italy kept up the name of GHIBELLINES, or IMPERIALISTS, in order to eſtabliſh their own power, and withſtand the papal encroachment.

* See INFERNO, C. x.

borders

borders of *Romagna*. That ſame night a large detachment ſet out for *Siena*, and by forced marches reached it before day. Next morning a Spy, in the habit of a *Franciſcan*, waited on the Magiſtrates at *Florence*, with a forged Letter, from the *Guelf* Faction at *Siena*, containing a promiſe to open the gate, if the *Florentines* would ſend a body of troops at an appointed hour. The magiſtrates, not ſuſpecting what had paſſed in the night, fell into the ſnare, and immediately diſpatched the flower of their Militia to ſecond the revolt of the *Sieneſe*. But as they marched along in full ſecurity, they were ſuddenly attacked by *Farinata*, at the head of a detachment of *Manfred's* Forces: The habits of diſcipline however preſerved them from the effects of ſurprize, they formed immediately, and a bloody and obſtinate action enſued: But in the heat of the Conflict

Bocca,* the head of the Abati Family, a *Guelf*, having been gained over by the practices of *Uberti*, cut off the hand of the *Florentine* Standard-bearer: The Standard fell, the *Florentines* were thrown into confuſion; the *Ghibellines* took advantage of the moment of diſorder, broke into the line of the *Florentines*, and drove them off the Field, with a prodigious ſlaughter of the Nobility and Gentry.

The victorious party, ſtill burning with animoſity, began to entertain the moſt ſanguinary Counſels: It was even propoſed to exterminate the Papal Faction, and level their native city to the ground. But *Farinata*, whoſe influence next to *Manfred's* was greateſt, generouſly oppoſed the moſt cruel deſign. He declared that his motive in taking arms was only to ſecure a retreat to his native place, not to be inſtrumental in its deſtruc-

* Inferno, Canto 32.

tion.

tion. His counſel prevailed. The *Ghibellines* entered the city in triumph, and the *Guelfs* were again expelled.

The *Florentine Guelfs* firſt took refuge at *Bologna*, and afterwards at *Parma*, where they joined the papal Faction; and in an engagement with the Imperialiſts, their valour turned the ſcale in favour of the *Parmeſans*. Meantime the Pope being hard preſſed by *Manfred*, who had uſurped the Crown from his Nephew, and looking upon himſelf as Lord Paramount of *Sicily*, deprived the orphan *Conradin* of his title to the Crown, which exceeded his power as Lord Paramount, and gave the inveſtiture to *Charles* of *Anjou*, brother to that King of France who is commonly called St. *Louis*. The *Florentine* exiles took advantage of this favourable criſis, and offered their ſervice to the Pope, who received them with joy. Meantime, *Charles*

of

of *Anjou* ſailed for *Italy*, with a numerous Fleet, and dextrouſly eſcaping the Gallies of *Manfred*, which lay in wait for him, arrived at *Oſtia*, where he was received by the *Romans* as the deliverer of their country, and inſtantly marched againſt the invader. MANFRED had a large detachment under BUOSO DI DUERA, at a defile where the *French* were obliged to paſs; but DUERA,* as it is ſuppoſed, having been corrupted by ANJOU, looked tamely on, and let him purſue his march. Struck with the rapid advances made by his rival, diſcouraged by the appearance of treachery, and perhaps ſtung by the memory of his perfidy, to his benefactor CONRAD, MANFRED ſent ambaſſadors with overtures of peace; but they were rejected with ſcorn, and the uſurper reſolved to make a deſperate ſtand at the paſs of *Coperano*.

* INFERNO, C. 32.—Villani Chron. Florent. S. 7. C. 27.

—Next to MANFRED, the ſecond in command among the *Ghibellines*, was the Marquis de CASERTA, and on his advice with reſpect to military affairs, MANFRED chiefly relied; but CASERTA having long ſuſpected a criminal commerce between his wife and MANFRED, ſecretly vowed vengeance, and took this opportunity of putting his deſign in practice. At a council of war, called before the engagement, he adviſed MANFRED to let part of the *Guelfs* paſs, and attack them at advantage when divided. On this counſel MANFRED implicitly relied, and ordered the defile to be left open till part had paſſed, but the impetuoſity of the *French* broke all his meaſures: The army of *Anjou* poured in like an inundation, and purſued the *Ghibellines* with a continued ſlaughter of ſeveral miles. MANFRED, with the broken remains of his army, retreated to the plains of *Beneventum*, whither he was purſued by ANJOU with ſuch precipitation, that he neglected to ſecure the country behind

behind him. MANFRED immediately perceived the overſight of the enemy, and availing himſelf of his ſuperior knowledge of the country, ſurrounded the whole army of *Anjou* at *Tagliacezzo*; there he could have compelled them by famine to come into terms, but, like POMPEY, he raſhly reſolved on battle, and fell in the action; a fate too mild and honourable for his perfidy and uſurpation. He is alſo charged with parricide by ſome hiſtorians.

CHARLES of *Anjou* immediately took poſſeſſion of *Naples*, and was crowned by the Pope. This was looked upon as the ſignal for deſtruction to the *Ghibelline* party in *Florence*. They ſaw their ruin approaching, and reſolved, if poſſible, to gain the people to their ſide, by a ſhew of patriotiſm. They immediately recalled ſome of the *Guelf* faction from *Bologna*, and gave them a ſhare in the government. *Bologna* was already famous as a ſeat of learning; and from it there were two legiſlators choſen

choſen to ſettle the commonwealth, one a *Guelf*, and the other a *Ghibelline*, who by the joint aſſent of all, were made *Podeſtas* at *Florence*; their names were * CATALANO DE MALASOTTE, and LODERINGO DI LEANDOLO. They had a council of thirty-ſix formed out of both factions to aſſiſt them, and made ſome good regulations; but what ſhewed the futility of their patriotic pretences, was their connivance at the introduction of a band of *German* mercenaries, by the *Ghibellines*, under pretence of protecting the State. The firſt occaſion of diſcontent was an exorbitant tax which they attempted to levy on the people, to pay theſe mercenaries. This raiſed a clamour againſt the new council; the populace took arms and ſurrounded the Senate, and GUIDO DE NOVELLO, the head of the *Ghibelline* faction, ſeized with an

* See INFERNO, C. 23.

unaccountable

unaccountable panic, fled out of the neareſt gate with his whole body of incendiaries, and all the *Ghibelline* faction. Next day, aſtoniſhed at their own folly, they endeavoured to return, but found the attempt too late—the *Guelfs* had reſumed the Government, and choſen CHARLES of *Anjou*, vicar of *Tuſcany*; but the citizens, tired of diſcord, reſolved to procure a coalition of parties, and by their influence, all the exiles were invited to return; but the *Ghibellines* ſtill remembered their exile, and the *Guelfs* their oppreſſions.

Meantime the news arrived that CONRADIN, the heir of *Sicily* and *Naples*, was on his way from *Germany*, with a numerous army, to regain his Crown from CHARLES of *Anjou*. This intelligence re-animated the *Ghibellines*, who hoped, by the aſſiſtance of CONRADIN, to gain the aſcendancy. —The *Guelfs* were no leſs depreſſed by fear, and when they heard that CONRADIN intended to direct

rect his march through *Tuſcany*, they applied to his rival for aſſiſtance. The forces of *Anjou* arrived at *Florence* before the army of CONRADIN, and the *Ghibellines*, who well knew their demerits with the people, once more thought proper to relinquiſh their country. The preſages of the *Ghibellines* were not vain; the gallant CONRADIN, who, tho' but fifteen years of age, had led an army from *Germany* to claim his birth right, was met by ANJOU, at St. *Valentine's*, near *Naples*, an aged *French* Knight, named ALARD, on his return from the Holy Land, had joined the army of *Anjou*, and CHARLES relying on his military experience, aſked his advice with reſpect to the diſpoſition of his forces. The veteran counſelled him to conceal a large body of troops in an ambuſcade, and to ſend a detachment before, led by a Knight, in the dreſs and arms of ANJOU; and, that if this body were defeated, the partial loſs would ſecure him the victory. ANJOU followed his advice, and cauſing

cauſing one COZANCE, a *French* Knight, to put on his arms, ſent him to meet the enemy at the head of a large detachment. The event was what *ALARD had foretold; COZANCE being taken for ANJOU was killed in the firſt onſet, and the *Germans*, thinking the buſineſs over, fell into diſorder, and began to plunder the dead. Then ANJOU, at the head of his ambuſcade, broke in upon them, drove them off the field with great ſlaughter, and took the unhappy CONRADIN priſoner: He was carried thence to *Naples*, formally tried, and condemned, and the laſt blood of the illuſtrious houſe of *Swabia* was ſhed upon a ſcaffold: FREDERIC of *Auſtria*, his generous patron, ſuffered with him. In his laſt moments he bequeathed his title to the crown of *Naples* to PETER of *Arragon*, who had married a daughter of MANFRED's, nor was

* See INFERNO, C. 28, Notes.

it

it long before an opportunity was given to aſſert the claim. The *French* were guilty of ſo much cruelty and oppreſſion in their government, that the *Neapolitans* and *Sicilians* breathed nothing but revenge. The Pope, NICHOLAS the third, began now to dread the encroachments of ANJOU, as much as he had his rival before. His jealouſy was raiſed to the bittereſt enmity by CHARLES's refuſal to marry his daughter to the Pope's nephew; and, he is ſaid, in revenge, to have laid the plot of the *Sicilian Veſpers*, where a whole people entered into a conſpiracy to maſſacre their oppreſſors. It is well known that the ringing of the bell for evening prayers at *Meſſina*, was the ſignal for the general maſſacre; and every *Frenchman* in the iſland, and even *Sicilian* woman, with child by *Frenchmen*, were put to death without mercy. ARAGON was ready with a fleet, to take poſſeſſion of the iſland immediately after the action; and in his poſterity

the

the *Norman* line ſit on the throne of *Sicily* at this day.

The Crown of *Naples* continued in the *Anjou* family a few generations more, till the unfortunate JOAN, great-grand-daughter to CHARLES of *Anjou*, ſucceeded. The tragical death of her huſband, and her marriage with the murtherer, leaves an indelible ſtain upon her memory.

After a life of guilt and misfortune, ſhe adopted as heir LOUIS of *Anjou*, brother to CHARLES the fifth, of *France*. From him the title devolved afterwards to CHARLES the eighth, of *France*, who won and loſt *Naples* in a few months, which, after many revolutions was finally annexed to the Crown of *Sicily*, by FERDINAND, of *Aragon*, grandfather to the Emperor, CHARLES the fifth.

But

But while the ſouthern provinces of *Italy* and *Sicily* were drenched in blood, *Florence*, by her own exertions, aroſe to a pitch of glory, unknown before.

In the diſputes between the *Guelfs* and *Ghibellines*, the power of the people had inſenſibly increaſed.——They were attached to the *Guelf* faction, and by that means their influence roſe to ſuch a degree, that, after ſeveral changes of the conſtitution, they propoſed that the city ſhould be governed by three *Priors* or *Prætors*, to be choſen indifferently from the Patricians and the Plebeians. *The nobles were at variance among themſelves, and each party feared, that if they ſhould deny the popular requeſt, the rival faction would take advantage of it to join the people, and turn the

* Machiavel Hiſt. Flor. L. 2.

ſcale againſt them: Thus, each being intimidated by the other, they both agreed to grant the demands of the Plebeians; and thus the people obtained a ſhare in the government, which from being ariſtocratical, began to wear an aſpect of democracy.

The nobles, however, ſtill retained their family influence, and, though they were guilty of daily outrages, it was very difficult to bring any of them to a trial. The continual diſturbances occaſioned by theſe feuds, gave a fair pretext to the popular party, to demand a large body of troops to be levied, who, under the command of an officer, called *Gonſalionere*, ſhould be entirely at the devotion of the *Priors*. Theſe were intended to ſuppreſs any tumult raiſed by the nobles. Still however, while any of the nobles had a ſhare in the government, the courſe of juſtice was impeded.

ed. The daily miſchiefs which this occaſioned, induced GIAN de Bella,* a Patrician, but a lover of his country, to propoſe in a general aſſembly, a total excluſion of the nobles from any ſhare in the government, to encreaſe the militia from one to four thouſand, and to order the *Gonſalionere* to reſide continually with the *Prior*. Meantime an atrocious murder was committed by a young Patrician of the *Donate* family, and the *Gonſalionere*, with all his additional forces, found himſelf unable to call him to account. The people complained to their patron, *Gian de Bella*; he, as the more moderate courſe, deſired them to lay their complaints before the prior. They, not obtaining ready admittance, attacked the palace, and levelled it to the ground. This was a ſufficient handle to the nobles to accuſe *Gian de Bella* of raiſing diſtur-

* Of the ſame Family with Dante. See Canto 29.

bances in the State, and he, foreſeeing the ſtorm, wiſely withdrew.

By this effort the nobles found that their ſtrength conſiſted in their union, and that all the advantages gained by the people were merely the effect of patrician diſcord.

In conſequence of this they made a ſecret coalition againſt the populace, and reſolved to engroſs all the power to themſelves; but, elated with their conqueſt over *Gian de Bella*, they took their meaſures too openly, the people flew to arms, and the adverſe parties were on the point of an engagement, when the more moderate citizens interpoſed, and, with difficulty brought about a reconciliation, on condition that the nobles ſhould again have a ſhare in the *Priorate*.

The

The names of *Guelf* and *Ghibelin* were now almoſt forgotten at *Florence*, but other factions ſoon aroſe whoſe quarrels had a more pernicious effect. The occaſion was this:* The family of *Cancelieri*, at *Piſtoia*, a ſmall ſtate, ſubject to *Florence*, was divided into two branches, the heads of which were at this time *Guilielmo*, and *Bertaccio*, or *Foccacia*.——A ſon of *Guilielmo*, named *Lore de Cancelieri*, happened to ſtrike the ſon of *Bertaccio*, with a ſnow-ball, in the eye. The blow left a mark, and *Guilielmo*, knowing the brutal ferocity of his kinſman, ſent his ſon immediately to *Bertaccio*, to make an apology. *Bertaccio* ſeemed only to have wiſhed for an opportunity of quarrelling with the other branch of the family. He ordered the boy to be ſeized, and very deliberately cut off the offending hand, coolly remarking, "that blows only could be repaid with blows, not "with words."—The father of the mutilated youth ſummoned his dependents to arms: The

* Machievel L. 2. Villani L. 8. C. 32.

family

family of *Bertaccio* aſſembled in defence of their kinſman, and *Piſtoia* was ſuddenly involved in all the horrors of a civil war.——DANTE was at this time *Prior* of *Florence*, and it was he who gave the advice, ruinous to himſelf, and pernicious to his native country, of calling in the heads of the two factions to *Florence*.—The founder of the *Cancelieri* family had firſt married a lady, called *Bianchi*, or the white faction, the others immediately called themſelves *Neri*, or blacks. On their arrival at *Florence*, the *Cherihi*, a noble family, immediately declared for the *White faction*. Their inveterate enemies the *Donate*, inſtantly joined the *Blacks*, and all *Florence* was again divided into two parties, as intereſt or inclination led them.

The conſpiracy of the black faction to call in CHARLES of *Valois*, and the ſubſequent exile of the white faction, with DANTE, will find a more ſuitable place in the life of the Poet.——*Florence*, in

in the midſt of theſe convulſions, gained new ſtrength, and acquired new glory. The liberal arts had already got footing there, ſo early as the twelfth century, after the power of the Emperors had declined in *Italy*. At the death of *Frederic* the ſecond, it had been *really* free, but it was enabled to make a formal purchaſe of its freedom, from the Emperor *Rodolph*, of *Hapſburgh*, who ſucceeded the *Swabian* line, and from that period till the fifteenth century, the Emperors were ſo much involved in *German* politics, that they neglected *Italy* entirely.—It was during this decline of the imperial power, that *Florence*, *Bologna*, *Piſa*, and *Lucca*, gained the liberty of governing themſelves by their own laws, and that the power of *Venice* grew formidable; but though other republics enjoyed their liberty for a longer period of time, though *Venice* was ennobled by conqueſt, and *Piſa* by commerce, yet none were more illuſtrious by their freedom than *Florence*. Long before

before the taking of *Conſtantinople* by the *Turks*, which is looked upon as the common æra of the revival of learning, ſhe, like another *Athens*, ſaw the arts revive in the lap of liberty.

We owe the invention of many uſeful manufactures, and the improvement of almoſt all the ſciences to *Italy*, about that period. CHARLES of *Anjou*, though attended by the demons of diſcord and oppreſſion, made ſome compenſation by tranſporting the *Provençal* poetry from *France* to *Italy*, and upon the wild compoſitions of the *French Troubadours*, or ſtrolling minſtrels, the genius of *Dante*, *Petrarch*, and *Boccace*, were formed; elegance and poetry particularly were carried to perfection in *Florence*; and even ſo early as the time of *Boniface* the eighth, among the orators who were ſent to congratulate him on his exaltation, there were no leſs than eight *Florentines*. From this æra, till the

the time of *Leo* the tenth, *Italy* produced a ſucceſſion of men of genius, when the ſeeds that had been ſown by the conteſts between the Pope and Emperor produced *their laſt and nobleſt fruit in the Reformation.*

Even ſo early as the twelfth century, people began to diſpute very freely concerning religion. It was then the *Albigenſes* appeared, a ſect, who acknowledged no law, but that of the goſpel, and held tenets nearly ſimilar to thoſe of the proteſtants. They were perſecuted by Pope *Innocent* the third, and maſſacred without mercy. It was on this occaſion the inquiſition was firſt eſtabliſhed, but its efforts were too feeble to ſuppreſs the ſpirit of enquiry. When it was extinguiſhed in *Languedoc*, it was kindled anew in *Piedmont*, and when baniſhed from *Italy*, it took refuge in *Bohemia.*

Diſputes concerning the mereſt trifles and abſurdities, were proſecuted with equal inveteracy. The *Franciſcans*, in the fourteenth century, took into their head to deny that they had a property in any thing, even in what they eat and drank, the property they beſtowed on the church. Pope *John* the twenty-ſecond, was offended that they ſhould make an empty compliment to the church, and wrote againſt them with great acrimony. The Emperor *Lewis*, of *Bavaria*, the Pope's enemy, defended the *Franciſcans*, and the Pope, in revenge, ſeized and burnt as Heretics ſome of the moſt contumacious of them. This is one inſtance out of many, that could be given, of the blind and bloody zeal of the times. The miſchiefs of ſuperſtition, the ravages of religious wars, and the baleful influence of contending for ſpeculative opinions, are favourite topics of declamation. It is a common artifice of ſophiſtry, to blend the ideas of religion and ſuperſtition together, and argue againſt

againſt the benefits of one, from the ills that attend the other. But to an attentive obſervet of this period, it will appear, that even the wildeſt ſuperſtition of the times, had ſuch ingredients mixed with it as formed the ſeeds of knowledge, liberty, and virtue; effects which did not always follow the boaſted philoſophy of thoſe maſters of reaſon, the ancients.

The conteſt between the Popes and Emperors was attended with ſome partial evils in its progreſs, but theſe partial evils produced univerſal good. The diſpute was intereſting to the laſt degree: It was of no leſs conſequence than to determine whether the Pope ſhould have the whole eccleſiaſtical affairs of *Germany* at his diſpoſal, or the Emperor annihilate the liberty of *Italy*. Nothing could be better adapted to enlarge the minds of men, and exerciſe their intellects, than the adjuſtment of thoſe complicated

rights,

rights. The examination of their origin muſt have carried their enquiries back, by a natural and eaſy aſcent, to the times of primitive and pure religion, and the golden age of ancient liberty.—Hence they muſt gradually have acquired a more juſt idea of their religion, a clearer notion of the rudiments of policy; and both muſt have been ſtamped on their minds with a deeper impreſſion by the illuſtrious examples of antiquity. We find the ſalutary effects of theſe diſputes in opening the mind very early, particularly in the writings of DANTE. In his book DE MONARCHIA, written to aſſert the claims of the Emperor againſt the Pope, he expatiates upon clerical abuſes with great freedom. PETRARCH follows him in the ſame track: He inveighs againſt the depravity of the times with great aſperity, and his invectives are more pointed, becauſe more impartial. In ſhort, the diſpute between the contending parties was an extenſive field for genius. The conflict

of

of ſuch diſputants muſt have ſtruck out truth at laſt, and the mind having once felt its powers, muſt have exerted them, not only in religion and politics, but on every art, and ſcience, on every thing uſeful and ornamental.

The influence of this diſpute on liberty was more immediate. The Emperor encouraged the Ghibelline faction in *Italy*, to throw off their ſlaviſh dependence on the Pope, and truſt to the protection of the imperial *Faſces*. By this means, he was often on the point of conquering *Italy*; but when the prize was almoſt within his reach, the papal influence was ſo great in *Germany*, that the Pontiff could, at any time, raiſe commotion againſt his enemy, in his native dominions. Not only the Clergy, but the Laity, ſeldom wanted a pretence for diſcontent. This often called the attention of the Emperor to domeſtic objects: His preſence

preſence was often claimed in both places at once, and that people, from whom he was obliged to be abſent, ſeldom failed to puſh their pretenſions into rights, and ſet up claims under the latter Emperors, which, under CHARLEMAGNE, were unknown. The Emperors were alſo often obliged to buy the friendſhip both of the *Germans* and *Italians*, with large immunities. Hence gradually aroſe the rights of the *Germanic* body, and the dear-bought liberty of the *Italian* republics.

With reſpect to the influence theſe diſputes had upon the *manners* of the people, we muſt own it was of a more mixed kind. The enthuſiaſm of miſtaken zeal, conducted by deſigning men, often drove them to atrocious actions; but from the very complexion of their *crimes*, we may trace their *virtues*, had we no other document. When a man's faults proceed from the miſtakes of conſcience,

ſcience, may we not juſtly conclude, that conſcience has, in general, a ſtrong influence over him?

In ſome things it may be miſtaken; but, for the moſt part, it muſt conduct him right.—His notion of the importance of certain opinions, may impel him to perſecute the ſuppoſed enemies of orthodoxy; but, if he looks upon thoſe opinions as appendages of a revealed law, for theſe eſſential parts of the law he muſt entertain the moſt reverential regard. If this revelation coincides with, and enforces the primary notions of right and wrong engraven on the heart of every man, the law, as far as it is clear, muſt have an influence on his life, and the more, the further he is removed from the career of ambition, and the temptations of power. The progreſs of knowledge from the cauſes above mentioned muſt enlighten

lighten his mind, and aſcertain his duty; and thus religion, by degrees, muſt have diſengaged itſelf from the incumbrances of ſuperſtition. If we compare this deduction with the hiſtory of the middle ages, it will appear, that not only the reformed, but the Catholic churches, gradually relinquiſhed the groſſeſt of ſome of their tenets' and adopted a more liberal turn of thinking.

The pretence of forwarding the intereſts of religion has often occaſioned miſchiefs of the moſt virulent kind. Are we to make this an argument againſt religion itſelf?—Every thing that takes a ſtrong hold on the mind of man may be equally abuſed. The love of liberty itſelf has been equally revered, and equally perverted; but no ſophiſter ever preſumed to make this an argument againſt well regulated freedom. When the phantoms of religion and liberty can lead men into ſuch

ſuch wild extremes, it only proves how eſſential the realities are to ſociety.

There is a general cry againſt religious intolerance, without diſtinguiſhing between the vigilance of proper diſcipline, and the extreme of perſecution.——Toleration is alſo extolled in a ſtrain of general panegyric, by people who do not ſeem to know the difference between the needful jealouſy of a wiſe legiſlature, anxious for the virtue of a people, and that pernicious negligence which attended the abuſe of toleration in the declining days of *Athens* and *Rome*.

The fervours of religion have often actuated the paſſions to deeds of the wildeſt fanaticiſm. — The *booted Apoſtles* of Germany, and the *Cruſards* of Florence, carried their zeal to a very guilty degree. But the paſſion for any thing laudable

will hardly carry men to a *proper* pitch, unleſs it be ſo ſtrong as ſometimes to puſh them beyond the golden mean.—The enthuſiaſm of *Engliſh* valour has often puſhed our countrymen to acts of the wildeſt deſperation; but with *leſs*, perhaps, Britons had not been heroes. The ſame zeal ſent the miſſionary to the north, and the conqueror to the ſouth: it often raiſed a tempeſt which marked its road with devaſtation; but at the ſame time depoſited the ſeeds of virtue, order, and civility. The wildeſt extravagancies of miſtaken zeal tend to work its own cure. Religious diſputes occaſionally inflame the paſſions; but nothing ſo much opens the mind and enlarges the underſtanding, as nothing is of equal importance. This is plain to any one that marks the progreſs of the human mind during the four ages immediately preceding the reformation. The renovation of learning and the arts owes more to religious conteſts than to any other circumſtance whatever;

whatever; they relum'd the flame of liberty, and ſpread the light of truth, *before* the arrival of thoſe Greek ſophiſters from Conſtantinople, to whom the revival of learning is generally attributed.

Such were the effects of intolerance even in the extreme. In a more moderate degree, every well-regulated government, both antient and modern, were ſo far intolerant, as not to admit the pollutions of every ſuperſtition and every pernicious opinion. It was from a regard to the morals of the people, that the Roman Magiſtrates expelled the Prieſts of Bacchus *, in the firſt and moſt virtuous ages of the republic. It was on this principle that the Perſians deſtroyed the temples of Greece wherever they came. So-

* Livy, Herodotus.

crates was accuſed of bringing in new Gods, becauſe *new Gods*, as the wiſe Athenians thought, might bring in new pollutions.

The Romans are ſaid to have admitted every mode of worſhip within their walls *. Would they, in the time of their virtue and glory, have given admittance to the *Venus Mylitta* of the Eaſt, with all her train of Proſtitutes? There always was, and always will be, in every good government, an intolerant zeal of virtue againſt vice, an intolerance which the Chriſtians did not, as ſome ſuppoſe, borrow from the Jews; but both they and the Jews borrowed it from the unalterable Law of Right. The dread of popery in the laſt age was not an unmeaning antipathy to certain *ſpeculative* opinions, but a well-grounded

* Gibbon's Decline of the Roman Empire.

fear

fear of the influence of ſuch opinions on ſociety. It was a deſign well becoming any government, to abridge the power of a body of men confeſſedly under a foreign influence.

The Athenians and Romans kept a watchful eye, not only over the groſſer ſuperſtitions, but over impiety; becauſe they knew, that impiety and infidelity diſſolved the ſanctions of morality, and brought on both public and private corruption. *Polybius* plainly attributes the fall of freedom in *Greece* to the prevalence of atheiſm *. In Rome, Epicurean philoſophy and political corruption went hand in hand. It was not till the republic was verging to its fall, that Cæſar dared in open ſenate to laugh at the *ſpeculative* opinion

* That attributes the formation of the world to chance, and denies a providence.

of

of a future ſtate. Theſe were the times of univerſal toleration, when every pollution, from every clime, flowed to Rome, whence they had carefully been kept out before. How far they prevailed we learn from Juvenal; and we are taught, by the acrimony of his invective, how far it infringed on the antient cenſorial vigilance of the republic. The conſequence was natural; impiety and its concomitant corruptions were ſo completely eſtabliſhed at Rome, and the doctrine of immortality was ſo deeply obſcured by ſophiſtry, that a late celebrated writer makes it a queſtion, whether it ever was believed by the multitude; and brings as his vouchers, Horace an Epicurean, and Juvenal a declamatory ſatiriſt; the latter indeed, in a ſtorm of ironical indignation, obſerves, that ſcarce any one now believes thoſe fables of futurity; a rhetorical obſervation which might well enough become the pulpit in any age of Chriſtianity.

But

But to leave the digreſſion:—It may be thought that there is too much attributed to the trifling ſchool-divinity of the age, and the eternal diſputes and wars occaſioned by religion; it may be thought that the political and moral improvement, which began to adorn the concluſion of the fifteenth century, ſprung from the natural courſe of human affairs, leaving religion out of the queſtion: it may be urged, that the cauſes were the ſame that raiſed Athens and Rome to their glory, viz. the cultivation of reaſon, and the natural progreſs of ſociety from rudeneſs to civilization. I leave it to thoſe who are beſt acquainted with the ſpirit of antiquity, to determine whether a ſpecies of religion (mixt indeed with ſuperſtition) had or had not a very principal ſhare in raiſing thoſe celebrated nations to the ſummit of their glory: their decline and fall, at leaſt, may fairly be attributed to irreligion, and to the want of ſome general ſtandard of morality,

whoſe

whoſe authority they all allowed, and to which they all appealed. The want of this pole-ſtar left them adrift in the boundleſs ocean of conjecture; the diſputes of their phiſoſophers were endleſs, and their opinions of the grounds of morality were as different as their conditions, their taſtes, and their purſuits. *Cæſar* was an *Epicurean*, who laughed at the notion of immortality and moral obligation, becauſe he meant to overturn the conſtitution. Had he been conquered, or a ſlave, like *Cato* or *Epictetus*, he had probably been a Stoic: his great ſoul would have taken pride in patience and temperance; he would have allowed Virtue to be the *only good*; and, from the inequality of things here, inferred a future retribution. *Cicero* wavered between both parties and both opinions; *Socrates* and *Plato* honeſtly owned their want of a cœleſtial guide; and *Pyrrho*, taking advantage of the endleſs wanderings of human reaſon, concluded, that all men were involved in

hopeleſs

hopeleſs ignorance, and all things in impenetrable obſcurity; and, conſequently, that between virtue and vice there was no diſtinction. In the old world, where they had no general ſtandard to refer to; where one grounded his opinions on principles that another denied; where one party held animal pleaſure, another riches, a third virtue, to be the *chief good*; their contradictions muſt have been infinite, and the pernicious conſequence of their diſputes muſt have been univerſal ignorance and obſcurity, unleſs a new ſyſtem had appeared, which brought men back to the genuine ſentiments of nature, and enforced her internal dictates of right and wrong by the moſt powerful ſanctions.

A ſubject of ſuch importance muſt have produced diſputes; but theſe diſputes had a neceſſary tendency to produce both knowlege and virtue.

To

To the conteſt we owe the revival of learning; the authority of the revealed law was allowed by all; in its eſſential parts all agreed: their diſputes about ſome leſs eſſential parts produced at leaſt critical knowlege, and the progreſs of knowlege will in the end bring about an uniformity of opinion. Even in the time of their fierceſt diſputes, their concurrence, as to eſſentials, muſt have given at leaſt the *ſpirit of the law* an extenſive influence on morals, and it evidently has.

If the rational powers of man are now advancing to their zenith, we know what gave them their firſt impulſe. If our ſyſtems of moral philoſophy are now more clear and better founded, we can eaſily trace the cauſe: one of our beſt moraliſts has deduced our obligations to virtue from our natural feelings of ſympathy and notions of propriety; and by this made his whole work

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an illuſtrious comment on that divine precept, "*Do unto others as you would they ſhould do unto you.*"

The enemies of revealed religion may be divided into two claſſes; one attacks its origin, another its conſequences: the firſt thinks it eaſy to account for its formation by a concurrence of fortuitous incidents, without having recourſe to divine ſuperintendence; the other can ſee no effect from it but fanatic quarrels, tyranny, and deſolation: the firſt cannot avoid perceiving its beneficial conſequences; yet, as its precepts are hoſtile to their favourite inclinations, they endeavour to find its origin in chance, ſuperſtition, or a perverſion of reaſon; the ſecond ſet of adverſaries, more enlightened and more ſubtle, find it in vain to combat the accumulated evidence of prophecy atteſted by hiſtory, and miracles confirmed

firmed by effects ſcarce leſs wonderful; but they endeavour to diſgrace a cauſe that they cannot deſtroy, they attack it in its conſequences, and think from the abuſes of ſuperſtition to ſhow the futility of religion; concluding aptly enough, that if its progreſs be only marked with miſchief and folly, it could not originate in wiſdom: but if, from hiſtory and obſervation, it appears that Providence had a ſhare in its progreſs, it can hardly be excluded from its origin: a concurrence of fortunate incidents may have the appearance of chance; but where, for a ſeries of ages, deſigns ſeemingly pernicious, and accidents ſeemingly hoſtile, are found to change their aſpect, and operate uniformly in favour of *one* object, this is more than chance. It would be ridiculous philoſophy, to expatiate on the marks of wiſdom in the organization of a plant, and yet aſſert that the *root* was a concretion of matter, formed without deſign, and fitted to no end.—Still it may

be

be thought by ſome, that the real and legitimate effect of theſe religious diſputes was nothing but contention and bloodſhed, and that liberty, knowlege, and civilization, ſprung from them only by accident; and that this is not a ſingular inſtance of order ſpringing from confuſion. But to obviate this it will, I believe, on examination appear, that the diſputes concerning religion in the middle ages were eſſentially different in their cauſes, as well as their effects, from wars whoſe ſole motives are ambition or lucre. Even in the conteſt of freedom, we have often ſeen, that the proſperity attendant on conqueſt only tended to ſap the virtue of the conquerors; and that a noble reſiſtance to tyranny ended in an inglorious overthrow by vice. Accumulated and pernicious luxury is the victor's lot, in diſputes occaſioned by commerce; and the purſuits of dominion only vary the picture with the inſolence of the oppreſſor and the miſeries of the oppreſſed. The

Greeks

Greeks nobly reſiſted their Aſiatic Invaders; they purſued them to their native plains; but there they were encountered by a much more formidable hoſt, the Vices of the conquered, who chaſed them with diſhonour from the field, purſued them to their native ſhores, haunted them in the Temple and the Forum, uſurped their altars, mingled with their counſels, and in a few years amply avenged the cauſe of the Perſian Monarch.

The bloody devaſtations of Attila and Zingis left few other marks but the debaſement of the human character wherever they paſt; and the hiſtory of modern times ſhews us, in the ſtrongeſt colours, the pernicious effects of merely commercial wars. Compare this with the picture of religious quarrels, a picture touched with additional horrors by ſome of the firſt names of the age; there

there we find, by a common trick of ſophiſtry, Religion, diſguiſed under the name of ſuperſtition, repreſented as the cauſe of half the miſeries of the world. When, by the natural courſe of things, ſociety is ſhown as advancing by large ſtrides to perfection, juſt at the dawn of liberty and the ſciences, we are told that this happy ſtate of things was thrown into inextricable confuſion by religious diſputes; that Religion came in, armed with her Bible and ſword, rekindled the flames of diſcord, and threw back ſociety into its original barbariſm. This we are told by Authors who knew right well, that the firſt movement of the mind that ſet it on the road to perfection was religion; and that knowlege, virtue, and liberty were her genuine offspring; but let us ſtrip the ſubject of the colourings of eloquence, and view it in its ſimple ſtate with an unimpaſſioned eye. The Chriſtian religion, on its firſt introduction, was found incompatible with vice and every cor-

ruption

ruption of the heart, yet it gained ground, againſt the almoſt univerſal current of depravation. Thoſe who did not chuſe to mortify their darling appetites, and yet wiſhed to obtain a title to its promiſes, (or at leaſt a name among the heads of ſects) endeavoured to reconcile the doctrines of revelation to the vices of mankind. To this end they perverted the doctrine of grace, ſounded forth the merits of eleemoſynary donations, and exalted theory above practice, and faith above virtue. Hence ſprung a monſtrous birth of hereſy and corruption, which was, in every age as it aroſe, warmly oppoſed by the few friends of genuine religion and virtue. Theſe were the firſt religious quarrels; which, though they are made the theme of moſt tragical declamations by ſome writers, appear to be nothing elſe but the war of Virtue againſt Vice, of Reaſon againſt Sophiſtry. In the mean time the Weſtern Church, which had been leſs tainted with dangerous opinions

than

than the Eaſtern, by a fatal concurrence of events, acquired a large ſhare of temporal power. The doctrines of tranſubſtantiation, infallibility, abſolution, indulgences, purgatory, &c. were, in proceſs of time, invented, in order to ſupport this power. Theſe doctrines were early oppoſed by reaſon, and their pernicious tendencies to virtue and the intereſts of ſociety pointed out; while ſuch of the European potentates as found themſelves aggrieved by the boundleſs pretenſions of the church of Rome, under the colour of religion, oppoſed her by force of arms. This gave riſe to diſputes more bloody and extenſive; but ſtill their baſis was the wholeſome exertions of reaſon againſt ſophiſtry, and mental freedom againſt oppreſſion. This is the real hiſtory of theſe diſputes, which are branded by the name of the horrors of ſuperſtition; but what would have been the ſtate of the world, if theſe corruptions had gone on without being checked? And

how could it be expected they could be overcome without a long and painful conflict?—By long experience we have found the good effects of religious diſputes: like the conteſts of oppoſite parties in philoſophy, they tend to ſtrike out truth: for (if we may be allowed the metaphor) there is an elaſtic repugnance in the mind againſt receiving notions impoſed upon it by force, or againſt conviction; and the weight of the preſſure only makes it recoil with the bolder ſpring, particularly when tenets are impoſed upon her which outrage our common notions of right and wrong, virtue and vice. Hence religious conteſts, like all other intellectual diſputes, have been always friendly to the cauſe both of virtue and freedom.

Theſe are the diſputes which the enemies of religion repreſent in a light ſo odious, and lay to *her* charge, becauſe by them her name was perverted

verted and abuſed: what they cannot deſtroy they endeavour to diſgrace; and, under the name of Toleration, they endeavour to introduce an apathy, an indifference to the beſt and ſtrongeſt motives for purity of heart and rectitude of conduct: their motives we may juſtly ſuppoſe the ſame with thoſe of the firſt perverters of religion. Its old and ſecret enemies, under the maſk of friendſhip, endeavoured to contaminate the doctrines of revelation by reconciling them to their vices: its open foes find it vain to impoſe theirs upon the mind in this enlightened age; and not being able to reconcile it with their purſuits, they endeavour to deſtroy its influence in the world: yet, when they meet with the ſober cenſure of reaſon, they declaim againſt it as the clamour of eccleſiaſtical tyranny; and they will not allow that religion can be favourable to the light of knowlege or the cauſe of liberty, when it cenſures them for the propagation of their opinions;

but there are certain bounds, even to liberty; beyond this it takes the name of licentiouſneſs. The liberty of looſening the bands of ſociety, and deriding the ſolemn ſanctions of virtue, is the liberty of a lunatick; and it was to prevent ſuch wanton miſchief, that the true principles of freedom were firſt laid down.

Thus I have endeavoured to ſhow, that religion, under its moſt unfavourable aſpect, and attended with the moſt untoward circumſtances, was yet eminently beneficial to the beſt intereſts of ſociety; that, when polluted, it threw off the contamination; when perverted, it recovered its rectitude; and when traduced, it triumphed over calumny. It owed little to human aſſiſtance; for, in the middle ages, they who could beſt have brought about a reformation were averſe to the taſk: they did not chuſe to abridge eccleſiaſtical power, as they uniformly aſpired to eccleſiaſtical honours.

honours. I am aware at the ſame time that ſuch an enquiry may ſeem miſplaced, and incongruous to the preſent deſign; but in an inquiry into the ſpirit of the middle ages, the occaſion ſeemed natural, and the ſubject was a favourite one. It is ſufficient for the author, if, notwithſtanding the faults of the execution, the attempt ſhould meet the approbation of thoſe whom he is moſt ſolicitous to pleaſe: and if this ſhould call forth ſome more able inveſtigator, his ambition would be moſt fully ſatisfied.

THE

LIFE OF DANTE.

FROM

LEONARDO BRUNI.

N. B. Many Biographical particulars of DANTE, are taken from Mr. HAYLEY'S NOTES to his ESSAY on EPIC POETRY.

THE anceſtors of DANTE were of one of the firſt families of *Florence*, of the name of CACCIA GUIDA. ALIGHEERI was the ſurname of the maternal line, natives of *Ferrara*, ſo called from a golden

golden wing * which the family bore on their arms.—The poet was born in the year one thouſand two hundred and ſixty-five, a little after the return of the GUELFS or Pope's faction, who had been exiled from their native country, in conſequence of the defeat at † *Monte Aperte*. The ſuperiority of his genius appeared early, and, (if we may believe BOCCACE) his amorous diſpoſition began almoſt as ſoon to make its appearance.—His paſſion for that lady, whom he has celebrated in his Poem, by the name of BEATRICE, is ſaid to have commenced at nine years of age. She was the daughter of FOLEO PORTINARI, a noble citizen of *Florence*. His paſſion ſeems to have been of the chaſte and platonic kind, like that of his ſucceſſor PETRARCH, according to the account he has given of it in one of his early productions,

* Vellutello.

† See HISTORICAL ESSAY.

entitled

entitled *Vita Nuova*, a mixture of myſterious poetry and proſe; in which he mentions both the origin of his affections, and the death of his miſtreſs, who died, according to BOCCACIO, at the age of twenty-ſix.—The ſame author aſſerts, that in conſequence of this event, DANTE fell into a profound melancholy, from which his friends endeavoured to raiſe him, by perſuading him to marriage. After ſome time he followed their advice, and repented it; for he unfortunately made choice of a lady, who bore ſome reſemblance to the celebrated XANTIPPE. The Poet, not poſſeſſing the patience of SOCRATES, ſeparated himſelf from her, with ſuch vehement expreſſions of diſlike, that he never afterwards admitted her to ſit in his preſence, though ſhe had borne him ſeveral children. Either at this period, or upon the death of his firſt miſtreſs, he ſeems, by his own account, to have fallen into a profligate

courſe

courſe of life, from which he was reſcued by the prayers of his miſtreſs, now a Saint, who prevailed on the ſpirit of VIRGIL to attend him through the *Infernal* regions; at leaſt he gives this as the occaſion of his immortal work, the *Divina Commedia*, of which the INFERNO conſtitutes a part.

From the myſtic ſtrain of his poetry indeed,* one is in doubt whether his reigning vice was profligacy, or an ambitious purſuit of worldly honours: The latter at leaſt was the immediate occaſion of all the misfortunes of his future life.—To the profound learning of a recluſe, and the poliſhed manners of a courtier, he had joined an ardent deſire of military glory, and diſtinguiſhed himſelf

* PURGATOREO, Canto 30.

himſelf by his bravery in an action where the *Florentines* obtained a ſignal victory at *Arezzo*: This, joined with his reputation of conſummate learning, and knowlege of the world, prepared the way for his advancement to the firſt honours of the State. *Italy*, at that time, was diſtracted between the factions of the *Guelfs*, or partizans of the Pope, and *Ghibellines*, who adhered to the Emperor. After many revolutions the *Guelfs* had got the ſuperiority in *Florence*. In the year one thouſand three hundred, DANTE, with ſeveral colleagues, was elected Prior, the firſt executive office in the republic of *Florence*; and according to a fragment of a letter, preſerved by LEONARDO BRUNI, from this exaltation DANTE dates the beginning of his misfortunes.

Since the battle of *Campaldino*, or *Arezzo*, (where DANTE had diſtinguiſhed himſelf) the faction

tion of the *Ghibellines* ſeemed totally extinct; an uninterrupted flow of ten years proſperity was attended with conſequences more fatal to the *Guelfs*, than all paſt misfortunes.---The two noble families of the *CHERCHI and DONATI, had been engaged in a quarrel of an old ſtanding, but the feud did not break forth into open violence immediately:----The firſt occaſion of their having recourſe to arms, was a diſpute between two branches of the family of CANCELIERI of *Piſtoia*. The rival factions had diſtinguiſhed themſelves by names of the *Blacks*, and the *Whites*. *Donati*, from an old attachment to the part of the *Cancelieri*, called the *Blacks*, joined their faction: This immediately determined the *Cherchi* to join the *Whites*; and, in order to put an end to the quarrel, DANTE, and his colleagues, ordered the

* See View of the FLORENTINE Hiſtory, &c.

heads

heads of the oppoſite factions to remove from *Piſtoia* to *Florence*. This, as BRUNI obſerves, was like the introduction of a peſtilence; all the noble families of *Florence* immediately landed on oppoſite ſides. Some joined *Donati*, and the *black* faction, ſome declared for the *whites*, who were ſupported by *Cherchi*.

The quarrel ſpread, by the influence of theſe nobles, among the lower orders of the citizens, and there was ſcarce an individual in the city who was not enliſted under the black or white enſign. At laſt, at a ſecret meeting of the black faction, in the church of the *Holy Trinity*, by night, it was propoſed, by CARSO DONATI, to apply to BONIFACE the *eighth*, to terminate theſe inteſtine broils, by ſending CHARLES of *Valois*, of the blood-royal of *France*, to terminate theſe inteſtine broils. The *white* faction, having got intelligence of the project, immediately took the alarm, and aſſembled

aſſembled in arms, and clamoured loud againſt the ruinous project.

DANTE perceived the pernicious conſequences of DONATI's counſel, and from that moment it is probable he took a decided part againſt the *black* faction. However, to preſerve the appearance of impartiality, he, and his colleagues, gaining the multitude on their ſide, ordered the leaders of both parties, DONATI and CHERCHI, into confinement: But the real ſentiments of the Prior ſoon appeared. CHERCHI, and his adherents of the *white* faction were inſtantly ſet at liberty; while DONATI, with his *black Valeſians*, remained in bonds, or in exile. The Priorate indeed of DANTE had expired before the releaſement of the *white* faction; but the meaſure was nevertheleſs attributed to the counſels of the Poet.

This

This appearance of partiality gave the wiſhed for pretext to BONIFACE, to ſend CHARLES of *Valois* to *Florence*. As both the *whites* and *blacks* were only branches of the *Guelfs*, or old papal faction, CHARLES was honourably received by all, and preſerved the appearance of moderation: till, when he thought affairs ripe for his project, he, on a ſudden, recalled the exiles of the *black* faction, and baniſhed their adverſaries. To give a colour to this outrage, a letter was produced in public, ſaid to have been written by ſome of the leaders of the *white* faction, and promiſing the caſtle of *Prato* to FERRANT, the confidant of CHARLES, if he would prevail on his maſter to declare himſelf on the ſide of the *white* faction. The blame was thrown on DANTE, both of this letter, and the precedent baniſhment of DONATI. DANTE was then at *Rome*, ſoliciting the interference of the Pope, to conciliate the two parties, and reſtore peace to his afflicted country. Finding however,

however, his ſolicitations in vain, he returned; but returned only to meet the ſentence of exile, to ſee his poſſeſſions confiſcated, and his houſe razed to the foundation.—He had been, in his abſence, cited before the *Podeſta* of *Florence*, for miſdemeanours during his *Priorate*; and, on his not appearing, he was declared *contumacious*, and ſentence pronounced againſt him. At *Siena*, on his return, the news of the ſentence met him; and at the ſame time he ſaw himſelf ſurrounded by a numerous and illuſtrious body of exiles; who immediately formed themſelves into an army, under the command of *Aleſſandro di Romena*. They made ſeveral attempts to enter their native city by force, and once went ſo far as to ſeize on one of the gates; but they were ſtill repulſed with loſs.

Theſe different expeditions took up about the ſpace of four years; at laſt, when they found their

their hopes abortive, they diſperſed, and each ſought his fortune. DANTE firſt found a patron in the great *Cane de la Scala*, Prince of *Verono*, whom he has celebrated in the firſt Canto of the *Inferno*. The high ſpirit of DANTE was ill ſuited to courtly dependance; and it is very probable he loſt the favour of his *Veroneſe* patron by the republican frankneſs of his behaviour. An inſtance of this is given in ſeveral authors. The diſpoſition of the Poet, in the latter part of his life, had acquired a ſtrong tincture of melancholy: This made him leſs acceptable in the gay Court of *Verona*, where probably a poet was only thought a character fit to find frivolous amuſements for his patron. A common jeſter, or buffoon, (a noted perſonage in thoſe days,) eclipſed the character of the bard, and neither the variety of his learning, nor the ſublimity of his genius, ſtood him in any ſtead. CANE, the Prince, perceived that he was hurt by it, and, inſtead of altering

his mode of treatment, very ungenerouſly exaſperated his reſentment, by obſerving, one day in public company, that "it was very extraordinary, that the jeſter, whom every one knew to be a worthleſs fellow, ſhould be ſo much admired by him, and all his court; while DANTE, a man unparalleled in learning, genius and integrity, was univerſally neglected.

"You will ceaſe to wonder, (ſays DANTE) "when you conſider that ſimilarity of manners is the ſtrongeſt bond of attachment."—This anſwer was ſevere, but merited. It does not appear whether SCALA reſented it or no. It is certain that the Prince endeavoured to make the Poet an occaſional object of merriment in ſome very low inſtances, and DANTE condeſcended to meet him even in that humble ſpecies of wit.

CINTHIO

CINTHIO GERALDI, in his *Hecatotommithi*, gives us one inſtance of it, which is barely worth mentioning; as it marks the manners of the times. At table one day, the Prince, or his jeſter, had a boy ſet under the table, who took care to convey all the bones as they were thrown down, to the ſide of DANTE. After dinner, the reliques were produced as a teſtimony of his wonderful diſpatch.—"You have diſtinguiſhed yourſelf to "day in a very extraordinary manner," ſays the Prince:—"Not at all extraordinary," returned the Poet. Had I been a DOG (alluding to his patron's name *Cane*) I would have demoliſhed bones, and all, "as you have done."*

DANTE however ſoon found it neceſſary to ſeek his fortune elſewhere, and from *Verona* he retired to *France*, according to MANETTI; and

* A ſimilar ſtory is told of young HIRCANUS by JOSEPHUS.

Boccacio affirms that he diſputed in the theological ſchools of *Paris* with great reputation.—Bayle queſtions his viſiting *Paris* at this advanced period of his life; and thinks it improbable, that a man, who had been one of the chief magiſtrates of *Florence*, ſhould condeſcend to engage in the ſquabbles of Pariſian Theologiſts; but the ſpirit both of Dante, and of the times when he lived, ſufficiently account for this exerciſe of his talents; and his reſidence in *France* at this period, is confirmed by Boccacio, in his life of the Poet, (which Bayle ſeems to have had no opportunity of conſulting) where his biographer aſſerts, that he diſputed publicly with all comers.

But now other proſpects began to open: In the year one thouſand three hundred and eight, Henry, Count of *Luxemburgh*, was raiſed to the Empire. This afforded Dante a proſpect of being

ing reſtored to his native country; accordingly he attached himſelf to the intereſts of the new Emperor, in whoſe ſervice he is ſuppoſed to have written his *Latin* work, intitled, *De Monarchia*, in which he aſſerts the rights of the Empire againſt the encroachments of the papacy.——In the year one thouſand three hundred and eleven, he inſtigated the Emperor to lay ſiege to *Florence*; "in "which enterprize, ſays one of his biographers, "he did not chuſe to appear in perſon, from mo- "tives of reſpect to his native country."—The Emperor was repulſed by the *Florentines*, and his death,* which happened next year, deprived DANTE of all hopes of re-eſtabliſhment in his native country.

After this diſappointment he is ſuppoſed to have ſpent ſeveral years in roving about *Italy*,

* He was ſuppoſed to have been poiſoned by a conſecrated Hoſt.

in

in a ſtate of poverty and dependance; till he found an honourable eſtabliſhment at *Ravenna*, by the friendſhip of GUIDO NOVALLO DE POLENTA, Lord of that place. He received this illuſtrious exile with the moſt endearing liberality, continued to protect him during the few remaining years of his life, and extended his munificence even to the aſhes of the Poet.

Eloquence was one of the many talents which DANTE poſſeſſed in an eminent degree; on this account he is ſaid to have been employed in fourteen different embaſſies during the courſe of his life, and to have ſucceeded in moſt of them.

His patron GUIDO had occaſion to try his abilities in a ſervice of this nature, and diſpatched him as his ambaſſador, to negociate a peace with the *Venetians*; who were preparing for hoſtilities againſt

againſt *Ravenna*. MANELTE aſſerts that he was unable to procure a public audience at *Venice*, and returned to *Ravenna* by land, from his apprehenſion of the *Venetian* Fleet. But the fatigue of his journey, and the mortification of having failed in his attempt to preſerve his generous patron from the impending danger, threw him into a fever, which terminated in death. On the 14th of September, 1321, he died, however, in the palace of his friend; and the affectionate GUIDO paid the moſt tender regard to his memory.

This magnificent patron, ſays BOCCACIO, commanded the body to be adorned with poetical ornaments; and after being carried on a bier thro' the principal ſtreets of *Ravenna*, by the moſt illuſtrious citizens, to be depoſited in a marble coffin. He pronounced himſelf the funeral oration, and expreſſed his deſign of erecting a moſt ſplendid

did monument, in honour of the deceaſed: A deſign, which his ſubſequent misfortune rendered him unable to accompliſh. At his requeſt many epitaphs were written on the Poet. The beſt of them, ſays BOCCACIO, by GIOVANNI DI VIRGILEO, of *Bologna*, a famous author of the time, and the intimate friend of *Dante*. BOCCACIO then cites a few *Latin* verſes, not worth repeating, ſix of which are quoted by BAYLE as the compoſition of DANTE himſelf, on the authority of PAULUS JOVIUS, in 1483.——BERNARDO BEMBO, the father of the celebrated Cardinal, raiſed a handſome monument over the neglected aſhes of the Poet, with the following inſcription:

Exigua

Exigua Tumuli DANTHES *hic forte jacebas:*
Squalente nulli cognita pæne Letu!
At nunc marmoreo ſubnixus conderis arcu
Omnibus et cultu ſplendidiora nites,
Neinirum BEMBUS *muſis in cenſus Etruſcis*
Hoc tibi, quem in primis hæ coluere dedit.

Before this period the Florentines had vainly endeavoured to gain the bones of their great Poet from the city of *Ravenna.* In the age of LEO the tenth they made a ſecond attempt, by a ſolemn application to the Pope for that purpoſe; and the great MICHAEL ANGELO, an enthuſiaſtic admirer of DANTE, very liberally offered to execute a magnificent monument to the Poet. The hopes of the *Florentines* were again unſucceſsful: The particulars of their unſucceſsful petition may be found in the notes on CODIVI's life of MICHAEL ANGELO.

DANTE is deſcribed by BOCCACIO, as a man of middle ſtature; his demeanour was ſolemn, and his walk ſlow, his dreſs ſuitable to his rank and age, his viſage long, his noſe aquiline, his eyes full, his cheek-bones large, and his upper lip a little projecting over the under one; his complexion was olive, his hair and beard thick and curled. This gave him that ſingularity of aſpect, which made his enemies obſerve, that he looked like one who had viſited the infernal regions.—His deportment, both in public and private life, was regular and exemplary, and his moderation in eating and drinking remarkable.

At what time, and in what place, he executed the great and ſingular work which has rendered his name immortal, his numerous commentators ſeem unable to determine. BOCCACIO aſſerts, that he began it in his thirty-eighth year, and had

had finiſhed ſeven Cantos of his INFERNO before his exile. That in the plunder of his houſe, on that event, the beginning of his poem was fortunately preſerved, but remained for ſome time neglected, till its merit being accidentally diſcovered by an intelligent Poet, named DINO, it was ſent to the Marquis MARCELLO MALESPINA, an *Italian* nobleman, by whom DANTE was then protected. The Marquis reſtored theſe loſt papers to the Poet, and intreated him to proceed in the work, which opened in ſo promiſing a manner. To this accident we are probably indebted for the Poem of DANTE, which he muſt have continued under all the diſadvantages of an unfortunate and agitated life.---It does not appear at what time he compleated it; perhaps before he quitted *Verona*, as he dedicated the *Paradeſo* to his *Veroneſe* patron. The critics have variouſly accounted for his calling this Poem *Comedia*.

He

"He gave it that title," ſays one of her ſons, "becauſe it begins with diſtreſs, and ends with "felicity." The very high eſtimation in which this work was held in *Florence*, appears from a very ſingular inſtitution. The Republic of *Florence*, in the year 1373, aſſigned a public ſtipend to a perſon appointed to read lectures on the Poem of DANTE. BOCCACIO was the firſt perſon engaged in this office, but his death happening two years after his appointment, his comment extended only to the firſt ſeventeen Cantos of the INFERNO. Another very terrible inſtance of their veneration for their native bard is told by the author of the *Memoires de Petrarque*. *Ceno de Aſcoli*, a celebrated Phyſician and Aſtrologer, had the boldneſs to write parodies on the Poem of DANTE. This drew on him the animadverſion of the inquiſition. CHARLES, Duke of *Calabria*, thought to protect him, but in vain. The biſhop of *Averſa*, his chancellor, a *Cordelier*, declared that it was highly

highly impious to entertain a ſorcerer as a phyſician. There was no buſineſs done then without conſulting an aſtrologer, yet CHARLES was obliged to reſign him to the ſecular arm. He was accordingly burnt at *Florence*, about three years after the death of the Poet whom he had maligned.

END OF THE LIFE OF DANTE.

INTRODUCTION.

THE exordium of this ſingular Poem will ſeem a little abrupt, till the occaſion of it is known. —At the age of nine, the Poet had entertained a paſſion for the Lady, whom he has celebrated in his Poem by the name of BEATRICE. This paſſion, by his own account, muſt have been of the pure platonic kind, and ſeems by the traces it has left in this extraordinary performance, to have had a laſting effect upon him.

In one of his early works, he gives a large account of its riſe and progreſs; but its moſt

ſignal

ſignal conſequence is recorded in the preſent Poem.—According to his own account, when his BEATRICE had taken the veil, his platonic paſſion was gradually debaſed into purſuits of a leſs elevated nature; and by his allegory of the Panther, Lion, and Wolf, in the firſt Canto, we may conclude, that he had given way by turns to the ſuggeſtions of ſenſuality, ambition, and avarice.—This ambition, however, was the principal ſource of his following misfortunes.

His own account of his unfortunate lapſe, the various methods the ſpirit of BEATRICE had tried, to reclaim him before her deceaſe, and the final accompliſhment of his CONVERSION, are to be found in the thirtieth Canto of his PURGATORIO; an extract of which is ſubjoined, as the beſt introduction to the following Work.

SPEECH

SPEECH OF BEATRICE

TO THE

ELECTED SPIRITS IN PURGATORY,

With an ACCOUNT *of the* LAPSE *and* CONVERSION *of* DANTE.

PURGATORIO, Canto xxx. 115.

SUCH genuine worth adorn'd his early days,
That each prolific ſtem of heav'nly grace
In that rich mold a genial footing found.
But ah! the rankeſt ſoil but ſerves to feed
The plant of juice malign and noxious weed,
If culture's hand neglect the hapleſs ground.

II.

At firſt with ev'ry ſoft endearing art,
I clos'd the dang'rous paſſes to his heart,
While from my eyes he drank celeſtial light.
'Twas Heav'n by me diſpens'd the gladſome ray,
That led him on in virtue's rugged way,
By the pure Canon of eternal right.

III.

But ſoon, when life had reach'd a nobler ſtage,
To heav'nly cares I gave my riper age,
The world forgetting, and by love forgot.
For now my lover broke his eaſy chain,
His homage ſcorn'd, and ſought the world again,
By tranſient charms, and fairy phantoms caught.

IV.

Exalted now, and half to ſoul refin'd
The lucid mirror of the ſainted mind,

From

From fair Religion caught the genuine glow.
Yet, as the Woman to an Angel grew,
Still leſs and leſs he bore the dazzling view,
But left his tow'ring heighth, and fixt below.

V.

In vain, the wand'ring lover to reclaim,
Won by my prayers, the nightly viſion came;
In vain the pious thought aroſe by day:
Still more entangled in the fatal ſnare,
He mock'd my nightly toil, my daily care,
And fondly flung his better hopes away.

VI.

A ſure, but dreadful remedy was left
To ſhew the ſentenc'd train of bliſs bereft;
For this I dauntleſs ſhot the gulph of death.
For this my ſolemn adjurations drew
The ſoul of *Maro* from the hapleſs crew,
To ſhew the ſecrets of the worlds beneath.

That the ſubject of the following Poem was ſuggeſted to him in ſome of theſe dreams, in which his BEATRICE uſed "to viſit his ſlumbers nightly," ſeems more probable, than that he took the hint from a nocturnal repreſentation of the infernal regions on the river *Arno*. Even before his misfortunes, the Poet was remarkable for a gloomy and contemplative turn of mind; and the ideas of abſtraction from mortal cares, which he had learned from his miſtreſs, combating with his ambition, muſt have occaſioned ſtrong convulſions in a mind like his, ardent and active, but ſeaſoned with ſchool divinity and platonic notions. We are not then to conſider this work as merely an acrimonious ſatire, compoſed in the bitterneſs of exile; on the contrary, as part of it was written *before* the commencement of his misfortunes, while he was yet in proſperity and affluence, it appears the vigorous effervescence of a ſerious and reflecting mind, deeply tinctured indeed with enthuſiaſm,

enthuſiaſm, but verſed in all the learning of the times.—The mode of conveying the creations of fancy, and the precepts of morality, in a *viſion*, or *dream*, was already familiar from the works of the Provençal Poets, or Troubadours; a mode which continued to the end of the ſixteenth century, and ſeems peculiarly adapted to convey the moſt vigorous efforts of the imagination.

THE

THE

INFERNO

OF

DANTE ALEGHIERE.

CANTO THE FIRST.

ARGUMENT.

The POET *in a Viſion, or Dream, finds himſelf in the middle of a pathleſs wood, beſet with Beaſts of Prey, which he attempts in vain to eſcape, till he is accoſted by the Spirit of* Virgil; *who adviſes him not to attempt the common road, but to follow his guidance, through a dark and ſubterraneous paſſage.*

CANTO THE FIRST.

WHEN life had labour'd up her midmoſt ſtage,
And, weary with her mortal pilgrimage,
Stood in ſuſpenſe upon the point of Prime;
Far in a pathleſs grove I chanc'd to ſtray,
Where ſcarce imagination dares diſplay,
The gloomy ſcen'ry of the ſavage clime.

II.

On the deep horrors of the tangled dell,
With dumb diſmay, the pow'rs of mem'ry dwell,
Scenes, terrible as dark impending fate!
Yet tell, O muſe! what intellectual ſtore
I glean'd along the ſolitary ſhore,
And ſing in louder ſtrains the heav'nly freight.

III.

III.

Whether entranc'd, I left the certain path,
'Rapt in a viſion, to the vale of death,
(Such ſlumbers ſeal'd my ſenſe) is all unknown:
Yet down the glen, that fill'd my ſoul with fright,
I ſtray'd:—when lo! an hill's aerial height,
Veſted with glory, met the riſing ſun.

IV.

Now fled my fear, that thro' the toilſome night
The vital current froze, and urg'd my flight,
When the ſad moments of deſpair I told.
Then, like a toil-worn mariner I ſtood,
Who, newly 'ſcap'd the perils of the flood,
Turns him again the danger to behold.

V.

Thus all the horrors of that hideous coaſt,
That dreary wild by mortal never croſt,

I ponder'd

I ponder'd o'er, exhauſted as I lay:
Then up the hill, that o'er the valley hung,
With new-recover'd pow'rs inſtinctive ſprung;
Eaſing with planted ſtep the toilſome way.

VI.

When lo! a Panther in the op'ning ſtrait,
Couchant, with flaming eyes, expecting ſat,
All formidably gay, in ſpeckled pride.
Suſpenſe, I ſought to ſhun the dubious war,
But the grim tyrant of the woods afar
*Still oppoſite, his prey malignant ey'd.

* By the Panther, the Lion, and the Wolf that beſet DANTE in this gloomy vale, is meant (ſay the Commentators) "the three "reigning vices of the three ſtages of human life, ſenſuality, ambi- "tion, and avarice,"—

——A plague well known on many a waſted ſhore,—St. 10.

It is certain, that the Poet's three grand diviſions of the Infernal Regions, correſpond, in a good meaſure, with the diſtinction he makes here; the upper apartments being allotted principally to the lovers of ſenſuality, the middle to ambition, and the loweſt to the tribes of avarice.

VII.

VII.

Sweet roſe the vernal morn, for now the ſun
With thoſe fair lights his jocund race begun,
That ſaw with ſpringing time the hand of love
Strike from the ſullen deep the ſeeds of life,
And from the maſs of elemental ſtrife,
Elance yon burning orbs that roll above.

VIII.

The chearful morn, and ſpring's benignant ſmile,
New hope inſpir'd, to ſeize the gaudy ſpoil,
And with the ſpeckled hide my limbs inveſt;
But other cares the childiſh hope with-held,
For other thoughts the rage of combat quell'd,
And the warm inſtinct of my ſoul ſuppreſt.

IX.

For following cloſe behind, a fiercer foe,
(With rage and famine ſeem'd his eyes to glow)

A Lion

A Lion ſhook his long terrific mane:
The huſh'd winds ſeem'd his dreadful look to fear.
A famiſh'd Wolf attendant in the rear,
Like ſome gaunt fury, clos'd the deadly train.

X.

His look betray'd unbounded thirſt of gore,
A plague well known on many a waſted ſhore;
Again I left the height, by fear oppreſt.
Thus the reward of many a toilſome day,
In one diſaſtrous moment ſnatch'd away,
With diſappointment chills the widow'd breaſt.

XI.

I fled; ſhe follow'd down the dreary dell,*
The ſun retiring, look'd a ſad farewell;

* By the Poet's attempting to force the paſs beſet with monſters, the Commentators ſay, is meant that preſumption which attempts to encounter and make its way through the views and miſeries of human life, without attending to the light of reaſon, which is here introduced under the character of the ſpirit of VIRGIL.—For the ſuggeſtions of Reaſon on a future ſtate—See the Comparative View of the INFERNO, &c.

'Till

'Till ev'ry ling'ring hope my ſoul forſook:
Thus, while I ſtray'd along in dumb deſpair,
A beck'ning ſhadow faintly ſeen afar,
With ſtill, ſmall voice, the dreary ſilence broke.

XII.

" Whether of Heav'n," I cry'd, " or earthly born,
" Extend thy pity to a wretch forlorn,"
I ſpoke, and thus reply'd the gentle ſhade:
" Not earthly now, tho' born of human race,
" From LOMBARD ſwains my lowly birth I trace,
" Ere JULIUS yet the Roman ſceptre ſway'd.

XIII.

" Me thence to *Rome*, his great ſucceſſor led,
" While yet the pow'rs of darkneſs held in dread
" The world, unconſcious of their coming doom,
" Arms and the Man* I ſung, who ſent by fate,
" On *Troy's* ſad reliques rais'd a nobler ſtate,
" And the long glories of majeſtic *Rome*."

* DRYDEN.

XIV.

XIV.

Say, what detains thy ling'ring feet below,
On yonder hill eternal pleaſures blow;
To this Cimmerian vale, can aught invite?"
"If MARO's name be thine, abaſh'd, I cry'd,
That ſource which ſent thro' many a region wide
Such living torrents of poetic light.

XV.

Hail! Father of the Song! if filial awe,
With which I trac'd of old thy ſacred law,
Can aught the pupil of thy muſe avail;
If in ſome happier line, thy ſpirit breathe;
If theſe bleſt temples own thy lineal wreath,
Oh! teach thy ſon, yon' envy'd heights to ſcale!

XVI.

Where'er I wander thro' the glimm'ring ſhade,
Fate couches near in deadly ambuſcade,

And chilly dews my ſhiv'ring members ſteep:
See! where ſhe waits, her victim to ſurprize!"
"Another path is thine, the Poet cries,
To lead thee from the valley dark and deep."

XVII.

I wept, while gently thus my guardian God:
"Avoid yon' dark and unauſpicious road,
By Fiends frequented, and by fate o'erhung:
Monſter ſo fell, *Numidia* never bore
As ſhe, who riots there in human gore
By unextinguiſhable famine ſtung.

XVIII.

The Fiend her hunger tries to ſate in vain,
Still grows her appetite with growing pain,
And ceaſeleſs rapine feeds the riſing blaze.
Then, fill'd by many a Sire, the noxious peſt
Shall propagate along from eaſt to weſt,
*Till FELTRO's noble Hound begins the chace.

* An allusion to the name of CANE LA SCALA, the generous Patron of DANTE, who gave him an honourable and friendly reception in his exile.

XIX.

From FELTRO's noble heir ſhe meets her fate,
FELTRO! a name intrinſically great,
Above the little aid of gems or gold!
His truth and worth the harraſs'd land ſhall ſave
Where NISUS fills an honourable grave,
For which CAMILLA fell, and TURNUS bold.

XX.

Then Hell ſhall gorge her own infernal brood,
To envy's cavern by the foe purſu'd,
Whence firſt to light the baleful being ſprung.
But Heav'n in love to thee hath ſent me here
A kind and faithful guide—diſmiſs thy fear,
Thro' other worlds to lead thy ſteps along.

XXI.

Thine ears muſt meet the yell of ſtern deſpair
Where Heav'n's avenging hand forgets to ſpare,

And tribes forlorn a ſecond death implore.
Then thoſe that ſing amid the purging flame,
Inſpir'd by ling'ring hope at laſt to claim
A tardy wafture to the happy ſhore.

XXII.

Proſcrib'd, I thence retire, and one ſucceeds
Heav'n's Denizen, whoſe happier guidance leads
(If thou aſpire) the ſeats of bliſs to gain.
For he that holds the univerſe in awe
My ſoul excludes, an alien to his law,
From the dread glories of his heav'nly reign.

XXIII.

With incommunicable ſplendor bright,
In the high citadel of life and light,
The Sire of being fits in regal ſtate.
Thrice happy he that ſhares the gladſome ray,
Where in the precincts of eternal day
His choſen ſaints the holy influence wait."

XXIV.

XXIV.

"Then, by that Heav'n, and Heav'n-taught muſe,
I cry'd,
From this ill omen'd vale thy pupil guide,
And teach my feet to ſhun the fatal ſhore.
Shew where the ſinners mourn their ſtated time
'Till PETER call them to an happier clime."
I ſpoke, the Bard in ſilence ſped before,

END OF THE FIRST CANTO.

CANTO

CANTO THE SECOND.

ARGUMENT.

The Spirit of VIRGIL *opens his Miſſion, and tells the* POET *that he was ſent to reſcue him from the viſionary Beaſts of Prey, his ſpiritual and mortal Enemies; by ſhewing him the Secrets of the three Worlds,* HELL, PURGATORY, *and* PARADISE.—*The* POET *objects, that his human frailty is unable to bear ſuch Scenes; but he is encouraged by his ghoſtly Guide, and led to the Gate of the Infernal Regions.*

CANTO THE SECOND.

LIGHT ſlowly ſunk, and left the glimm'ring weſt,
And night's dun robe the weary world o'ercaſt;
I only woke to labour and to woe.
With faithful glaſs, the peril and the pain
Fancy reflects and breathes the fervent ſtrain
That ſings the ſecrets of the world below.

II.

Ye pow'rs of mind! and thou! whoſe ready hand
Sketch'd the dire viſion of the burning ſtrand,
And ſcann'd the horrors of the darkſome way.
Oh! ſpread your glories o'er the *ſombrous* ſcene
Decking her ſhade with thy perennial green,
And thine ennobling power at large diſplay.

III.

III.

" Prince* of the *Roman* Lay! illuſtrious Guide,
Oh! try the temper of my ſoul," I cry'd,
Ere yet thy pupil dares the dubious path.
Shall I preſume, tho' great ÆNEAS dar'd
To meet the terrors of the *Stygian* guard,
And trace, in duſt enſhrin'd, the vale of death.

IV.

" For him, the fortunes of his Line prevail'd,
Ere CLOTHO yet his final ſentence ſeal'd,
To paſs the ſhadowy gate, and darkſome way.
Hell's high Controller ſaw his mighty ſoul,
Saw the long glories of his line unroll,
And gave his ſanction to the bold eſſay.

* DANTE ſeems to be ſtruck here with the natural apprehenſions of a man entering into an unknown ſtate. It is remarkable that in VIRGIL we ſee none of theſe fears in ÆNEAS (at leaſt before his entrance into the Infernal Vault)—Though it is certain that we are not ſo much affected with any thing, however well deſcribed, as when we ſee others affected ſtrongly with it, the paſſions work moſt powerfully by reflection and ſympathy.—See MASON's Letters on ELFRIDA, &c.

V. " To

V.

"To Empire born he ſeem'd in reaſon's eye,
And fated by the ſanction of the ſky
To found the fortunes of victorious *Rome*.
There too, his ſeat the great Apoſtle choſe,
And the mild kingdom of EMMANUEL roſe
On TYBER fix'd, by Fate's eternal doom.

VI.

Still lives the Chief in thine unequal'd ſong,
Still Heav'n conducts his daring ſteps along,
And ſhews the papal gown, the laurel wreath.
Erſt too the choſen man* of *Tarſus* rode
On rapture's wing to yonder bright abode,
And brought down heav'nly grace to ſuccour faith."

* St. PAUL.

VII.

VII.

Should I with heroes and with ſaints preſume
To pierce the viewleſs world beyond the tomb,
And trace the hallow'd path with feet profane;
Would not theſe feeble limbs their truſt betray,
Should I attempt the interdicted way?
Say (for thou know'ſt) were not the trial vain?"

VIII.

Like one, who, ſome imagin'd peril near,
Feels his warm wiſhes chill'd by win'try fear,
And reſolution ſicken at the view,
Thus I perceiv'd my ſinking ſpirits fail,
Thus trembling, I ſurvey'd the gloomy vale,
As near the moment of deciſion drew.

IX.

"Speak'ſt thou thy thought!" the dauntleſs ſhade
Diſhonour'd ever, be that foul unwiſe, [replies;
That

That takes to counſel, cold-ſuggeſting fear!
Unmanly fear, that chains the lib'ral mind,
And fills with dreadful ſhapes the paſſing wind;
But thou reſolve, and ſcorn to linger here!

X.

High-favour'd mortal! hear the wondrous cauſe
That broke the chain of fate's eternal laws,
And led me here, a diſembodied ghoſt!
How thrilling from above, the ſhaft of woe
Awoke my pity in the fields below,
For thy ſad wand'ring ſon the haunted coaſt!

XI.

Exiles of either world, a band forlorn
For ever wanders round th' ambiguous bourne,
Of joy unconſcious, tho' exempt from woe.
Of them was I, when lo! a radiant form,
Whoſe angel-aſpect breath'd an heav'nly charm,
Drew me exulting from the depths below.

XII.

Star-like her eyes—but ſeem'd ſuffus'd with woe,
As thus ſhe ſpoke, in accents ſoft and ſlow:
" Poet, whoſe fame ſhall reach from ſea to ſea,
'Till Heav'ns eternal orbs forget to roll,
Oh! haſte thee hence! and ſave a ſinking ſoul,
Forlorn by fortune, yet belov'd by me.

XIII.

I fear, I fear, my ſuccour comes too late;
For ſee! he ſtruggles in the toils of fate,
Beſet by Fiends in terrible array!
Portentous rumours ſadden all the ſky!
But go, thy ſoft perſuaſive arts apply
To lead the wand'rer from the fateful way.

XIV.

Beatrice ſends thee to the world above,
(Her boſom throbbing with eternal love

That leads her from the fount of pure delight)
In mercy to oppoſe his mad career;
Where yonder paths to ſwift deſtruction bear
She hovers on the bounds of ancient night.

XV.

Go! gentle muſe! and when my anthems riſe,
Where Heav'n's loud chorus charms the liſt'ning ſkies,
One thankful ſtrain ſhall yet remember thee!"
She ceas'd, and thus her wiſh my anſwer crown'd:
"Prompt at thy will, and to thy orders bound
Thy faithful delegate, thy ſervant ſee!

XVI.

"Bleſt ſhade, I cry'd, whoſe diſentangled ſoul
Thy brethren taught to ſpurn the nether goal,
Pierce the blue mundane ſhell, and claim the ſky.
Such energy attends thy warm requeſt
That my ſtrong wiſh outruns my winged haſte,
Nor need you more your holy influence try.

XVII.

XVII.

But ſay! what motive arm'd thy gentle ſprite
To paſs the barriers of eternal night,
And view the ſecrets of the central deep!
What prompts thee to forſake the happy choir,
Which warms thy ſpirit with inſtinctive fire,
Again to mount and ſcale the heav'nly ſteep?"

XVIII.

" Since thou enquir'ſt ſo cloſe, the viſion ſaid,
Know—Heav'nly mercy to the Stygian ſhade
Attends my flight, and wards the ſhaft of pain.
She ſooths yon' burnings, and ſerenes the gloom,
'Tis only then our haughty hearts preſume
When danger threats, and we the threat diſdain.

XIX.

More than *one* heav'nly breaſt his perils move,
Whoſe mortal feet the dang'rous paſſage prove;

Ev'n CHARITY was ſeen with ſtreaming eyes
Before the footſtool of her angry God,
Warding with gentle hand the lifted rod,
While thus her liquid accents charm'd the ſkies."

XX.

" Ah! gentle LUCIA, haſte! thy ſuppliant ſave;
" See what dire ſhapes around their victim rave;
" And ſee how Sorrow bends his tortured frame!"
The Seraph ſhudder'd at the piteous ſight,
And down the deep abyſs of parting light
On wings of haſte the gentle viſion came.

XXI.

Apart, I ſat, in *her** ſequeſter'd bow'r,
Who, with her ſiſter, ſhar'd the nuptial dow'r;

* RACHEL.

When thus the Saint: "Oh! lov'd of Heav'n, attend!
Canſt thou behold the favour'd of thy choice,
Rais'd from the croud by thy inſpiring voice,
Thro' yonder vale his painful journey bend?

XXII.

Hark! his lamentings mingle with the gale;
See! Death's fell ambuſh lines the gloomy vale,
And the black torrent whelms the ſinking ſtrand."
She ceas'd, nor ſpeedier to the realms of day
The diſembodied ſpirit wings her way,
Than I obey'd the Seraph's high command.

XXIII.

Here, from the thrones above, I ſped my flight,
And bore the horrors of eternal night,
If haply thou would'ſt deign thy pious aid;
Truſting that muſe, which to thy mighty name
And to thy followers won eternal fame.
Then hear my fervent pray'r, illuſtrious ſhade!

XXIV.

XXIV.

Soon hither, at the weeping Saint's deſire,
Upward I flew, and left the Stygian choir:
Then why thoſe cold remains of ling'ring fear!
I point a way to ſhun the ſavage foe,
His are the heights, but thine the paſs below;
Go boldly then, and view its dangers near!

XXV.

Yet do'ſt thou fear?---applauding Heav'n above
Sends her three Saints, a family of love!
With me to lead thee from the deadly vale."
He ſaid, and Hope expell'd my fears away,
As dewy flow'rets on a morn of May,
Their boſoms open, and their tears exhale.

XXVI.

Thus I perceiv'd my glowing breaſt expand,
And now the dangers of the dubious ſtrand

Secure I ponder'd with intrepid ſoul.
Then, boldly cry'd, " Oh! Spirit ever bleſt!
Whoſe pity reaches from the realms of reſt,
And bids ev'n Hell her deadly rage control;

XXVII.

All hail!---and thou, whoſe ready flight obey'd,
Whoſe welcome voice my fainting courage ſtay'd,
And thine own ſpirit breath'd, divinely ſtrong!
Conduct my willing ſteps."---I chearful cry'd,
And boldly followed my celeſtial guide
Down that *Cimmerian* vale, with horror hung.

END OF THE SECOND CANTO.

CANTO THE THIRD.

ARGUMENT.

The POET, *conducted by the Spirit of* VIRGIL *along a deep and gloomy Vale, finds the entrance to the Infernal Regions, and ſees, over the Gate, an Inſcription ſuitable to the place; which terrifies him ſo much, that he is on the point of relinquiſhing the Enterprize.* VIRGIL *re-animates his courage, and leading him down the horrid Avenue, ſhews him the Puniſhment of the* NEUTRALS, *and* INDOLENT; *a mixed multitude of the Spirits, who had joined neither Party, on the Rebellion of* SATAN; *and of them, who in this Life, neither deſerved Glory nor Infamy.*

CANTO THE THIRD.†

"*THRO' me, the newly-damn'd for ever fleet,*
In ceaſeleſs ſhoals, to pain's eternal ſeat;
Thro' me they march, and join the tortur'd crew.
The mighty Gulph offended Juſtice made;
Unbounded pow'r the ſtrong foundation laid,
And Love, by Wiſdom led, the Limits drew.*

II.

"*Long ere the infant world aroſe to light,*
I found a being in the womb of night.

† The abrupt opening of this Canto, with the ſolemn Inſcription over the Gate of Hell, has a ſtriking and ſingular effect.

* That Love to the general welfare that muſt induce a moral Governor to enforce his laws by the ſanction of puniſhments; as here a miſtaken humanity is cruelty.

Eldeſt

Eldeſt of all—but things that ever laſt!—
And I for ever laſt!——Ye heirs of Hell,
Here bid at once your ling'ring hope farewell,
And mourn the moment of repentance paſt!

III.

This ſalutation ſad, mine eyes amaz'd,
As on the high PLUTONIAN arch I gaz'd,
In dark and dreadful characters pourtray'd,
" How dire the menace of the STYGIAN ſcroll!"
With deep concern I cry'd, the MANTUAN ſoul,
With friendly words my ſinking ſpirits ſtay'd.

IV.

" Let no unmanly thought the place profane,
The fated hour commands you to reſtrain
The ſickly fancies bred by wayward fear!
This is the ſcene I promis'd to unfold,
The regions of Eternal Wrath behold!
Nor tremble to ſurvey her terrors near!

V.

V.

" Here thoſe, in ſearch of bliſs who madly ſtray'd
From reaſon's path, by paſſion's lure betray'd,
Lament the ſad reſult!" then down the ſteep
With new-born hope his mate the Mantuan led,
Where wide before my wond'ring eyes were ſpread
The horrid ſecrets of the boundleſs deep.

VI.

Thence, Oh! what wailings from the abject throng
Around the ſtarleſs ſky inceſſant rung;
The ſhort, ſhrill ſhriek, and long reſounding groan,
The thick ſob, panting thro' the chearleſs air,
The lamentable ſtrain of ſad deſpair,
And blaſphemy, with fierce relentleſs tone.

VII.

Vollying around, the full, infernal choir,
Barbarian tongues, and plaints, and words of ire

(With

(With oft' between the harſh inflicted blow)
In loud diſcordance from the tribes forlorn
Tumultuous roſe, as in a whirlwind borne,
With execrations mix'd, and murmurs low.

VIII.

Struck with diſmay, "What ſounds are theſe, I cry'd,
And who are thoſe that fill the gloomy void?
Their crimes, their tortures tell." When thus the Bard:
"Behold th' ignoble ſons of ſloth and ſhame,
Who ſcorn'd alike the voice of praiſe, and blame,*
Nor dreaded puniſhment, nor ſought reward.

IX.

* Before we ſee the juſtice of the puniſhment deſcribed here, we are to conſider how general rules of morality come firſt to be formed.—As we naturally wiſh our actions ſhould be the objects of approbation, we naturally wiſh at firſt to pleaſe every body, but, finding that by pleaſing one, we run the riſque of diſpleaſing another, from the natural partialities of mankind, we learn to form to ourſelves another ſort of a judge, an impartial ſpectator, who neither being connected with us, nor with any party of men, with whom we act, will, on that account, form the moſt juſt opinion of our actions: For, as we might

IX.

Mingled they march with that degen'rate brood,
Who, when the Rebel of the ſky withſtood
His

might be partial to ourſelves, the people whom our actions concern might be partial to themſelves; but this perſon, this imaginary judge, abſtracted from either party, ſees the action as it really is, not thro' the miſts of paſſion or prejudice.—If the ſentiments of this judge coincide with our notions of ourſelves, if we think ſuch an impartial ſpectator would approve our conduct, our ſatisfaction is complete, in ſpite of the partial cenſure of our companions. If we think this impartial judge will condemn us, all the applauſe in the world cannot ſatisfy us.—SELF-LOVE can only be corrected by the eye of this impartial ſpectator: It is he that ſhews us the propriety of generoſity and the deformity of injuſtice; the propriety of reſigning the greateſt intereſts of our own, for the ſtill greater intereſts of others, when the happineſs or miſery of others depends in any inſtance on our conduct, we dare not (as ſelf-love would ſuggeſt to us) prefer any little intereſt of our own, to the yet greater intereſt of our neighbour; we feel that we ſhould become the proper objects of the reſentment and indignation of our brethren; ſo that beſides the love of our neighbour, there is a ſtronger love, a more powerful affection, that incites us to the practice of the ſublimeſt virtues, it is the love of juſtice, the love of what is honourable and noble, the love of the grandeur, dignity, and ſuperiority of our own character.

From theſe ſentiments, the general rules of morality are formed; for an amiable action, a reſpectable action, an horrid action, are ſuch as excite the love, the reſpect, or the horror of the impartial ſpectator, for ſuch perſons as perform them: Then the general rules which determine

His ſov'reign Lord, aloof their ſquadrons held:
Viewing with ſelfiſh eye the fierce debate,
Till, from the confines of the heav'nly ſtate,
Trembling they ſaw the rebel hoſt expell'd.

X.

Nor bore the victor-Lord the alien race,
But ſtraight, the foul pollution to efface,
Hurl'd them indignant from the bounds of light:
This frontier then the daſtard crew receiv'd,
Nor deeply damn'd, altho' of bliſs bereav'd,
And doom'd to wander on the verge of night;

mine what actions are, and what are not, capable to raiſe ſuch ſentiments, can only be formed, by obſerving what actions do, and what do not raiſe theſe ſentiments—from theſe ſentiments we form general rules, by appealing to which we try particular actions, of what ſort they are. It is the obſervation of theſe general rules, that general regard to what the impartial part of the world thinks of him, that makes a very eſſential difference between a man of principle and a worthleſs fellow.—The one adheres to his maxims, and acts with one uniform tenour of conduct; the other acts as humour, inclination, or intereſt, chance to be uppermoſt, without any regard to the ſentiments of the world.—So true it is, that he who deſpiſes fame, deſpiſes virtue, and muſt ſeem, to the eye of impartial reaſon at leaſt, equally liable to puniſhment with him that has fallen a victim to a ſudden guſt of paſſion. SEE SMITH'S THEORY OF MORAL SENTIMENTS.

XI.

XI.

Leſt thoſe whom Hell's profounder worlds contain
Of crimes unequal, doom'd to equal pain, [boaſt."
Blaſpheming Heav'n, ſhould make their impious
Quick I rejoin'd: "If giv'n by fate to know,
Whence then thoſe wailings of eternal woe
Wafted in anguiſh from the abject hoſt?"

XII.

Thus anſwer'd ſhort, and grave, the Mantuan ſwain,
"Juſtice and mercy both alike diſdain
And envy galls the deſpicable crew.
Ev'n in a deeper lot, and gloomier Hell,
The caitiff train would be content to dwell,
So might their mem'ries laſt for ever new."

XIII.

Grudging the fame that in the upper world
Attends the race to deep damnation hurl'd,

They

They execrate their dark oblivious doom.
We'll ſpeak of them no more! for, look, below!
See where the ſons of reprobation go,
Emerging from the depths of yonder gloom."

XIV.

I look'd, and ſaw a waving banner ſpread,
And following faſt the Legions of the dead;
A deep, exhauſtleſs train ſucceeding ſtill.
The tenants of the tomb, ſince death began
His daily inroad on the race of man
Unequal ſeem'd the lengthen'd line to fill.

XV.

The foremoſt racer of the gloomy hoſt*
That renegade I ſaw, who fled his poſt,

* PIANO MURONI DA SULMONA, an Hermit, remarkable for the ſeverity of his life and manners, who on the death of NICHOLAS the fourth was made Pope, by the name of CELESTINE the fifth.—He, though well qualified to reform the abuſes of the Church, ſuffered himſelf to be prevailed upon by the Cardinal DE ANAGNIA, (BENEDICT. CAIETAN) to abdicate the papacy. CAIETAN ſucceeded him by the Name of BONIFACE the eighth.

XV

And flung the croſier and the keys away:
Nearer I gaz'd, and knew the abject train
Who Heav'n's averſion, and their foe's diſdain,
But half inform'd their tenements of clay.

XVI.

Naked they march'd, and ſtill a warping cloud
Of flies, and hornets, ſeem'd the hoſt to ſhroud,
In ſwarms on every bleeding viſage hung.
A vizor foul! while tears commix'd with blood,
Still bath'd their reſtleſs feet, a welcome food
To the faſtidious worms that round them clun.

XVII.

Beyond a lazy current ſeem'd to creep,
And on the borders of the gloomy deep
A pale devoted train was ſeen to wait:
"Oh! fav'rite of the muſe!" I cry'd, "declare
Why, dim diſcover'd through the lucid air
Yon band ſo eager ſeems to try their fate."

XVIII.

XVIII

Thus I, and thus the Mantuan bard reply'd:
" Not till we reach the melancholy tide
Does Heav'n permit your mortal doubts to clear."
With downcaſt looks I mark'd his ſtern regard,
And ſilent, follow'd the immortal bard,
With glowing ſhame oppreſs'd, and filial fear.

XIX.

Far off exclaim'd the grieſly mariner,
" Hither, ye Denizens of Hell, repair!
The Stygian barque her wonted load requires;
For you diurnal ſtars benignant beam,
Prepare ye now to feel the fierce extreme
Of froſt corroſive, and outrageous fire.

XX.

But thou that dar'ſt with earthly feet to tread,
Tho' uncondemn'd the regions of the dead,

Avaunt! nor mingle with the curſed band!
A lighter barge attends thy parted ghoſt,
Waiting to waft thee to a different coaſt,
Where Saints expect thee on the happy ſtrand.

XXI.

Sternly, he ſpoke, and thus the Bard replied:
"Ceaſe, ſullen pilot of th' Infernal Tide!
Commiſſion'd from above he ſeeks the ſhore,
And pleads the will of Heav'n's immortal Sire!"
Quick from his eye-balls fled the ranc'rous fire,
And ſoon he ſmooth'd his brow, and dipt the oar.

XXII.

But when the abject crew that lin'd the ſtrand
With ſhudd'ring horror heard the ſtern command,
Loud they began to curſe their natal ſtar,
Their parent-clime, their lineage, and their God;
Then to the ferry took the downward road
With lamentable cries of loud deſpair.

XXIII.

Then o'er the fatal flood in horror hung
Collected, ſtood the Heav'n-abandon'd throng;
At laſt the Pilot gives the dreadful word:
And as in crowds on crowds the ſinners came,
The Fiend, with lifted oar, and eyes of flame,
Compell'd the ling'ring ſoul to haſte on board.

XXIV.

As ſome tall tree on autumn's cloſing day
Perceives her mellowing honours fleet away,
'Till earth is hid beneath the fragrant fall:
Thus the loſt ſons of ADAM's luckleſs race
Throng to the pinnace, and embark apace,
Swift as the faulcon hears her maſter's call.

XXV.

Soon as the Stygian keel forſakes the ſhore,
The fatal bank is fill'd by thouſands more.

While MARO thus the mournful cauſe explains;
" Heav'n's aliens here, from ev'ry diſtant land,
In countleſs crowds that blacken all the ſtrand,
Implore the fatal ſtroke, and court their pains."

XXVI.

See! from behind, Eternal Juſtice urge!
And ſee! how faſt to ſhun the flaming ſcourge
Eager thro' fear, they croſs the diſmal tide!
None ever lov'd of Heav'n, the voyage dar'd,
And not for nought, the fell and fearleſs guard
Thy paſſage to the dreadful ſhore deny'd!"

XXVII.

Thus ſpoke the Bard: and lo! the duſky plain
With tremulous throbs, as rack'd with inward pain,
In ſtrong convulſions to the centre ſhook.
Red, ſullen light'nings danc'd their diſmal round,
Portentous gleaming from the rocky ground,
And down I ſunk, with ſlumb'rous torpor ſtruck.

END OF THE THIRD CANTO.

CANTO THE FOURTH.

ARGUMENT.

The POET *proceeds to the* LIMBO *of the* ANCIENTS, *where he finds the ſouls of Patriarchs, Sages Poets, and Heroes, confin'd in a ſort of* ELYSIUM; *among whom* VIRGIL *names the moſt remarkable; and deſcribes a wonderful Revolution that had happened in the Region of the Infernal World, in the time of* TIBERIUS.

The Tranſlator has taken the liberty of adding ſome characteriſtic Imagery to the "Muſter-roll of "Names," which conſtitutes a great part of this Canto in the original.

CANTO THE FOURTH.

I.

A DEEP tremendous ſound my ſlumbers broke,
Rous'd with the ſubterranean peal, I woke
As ſome ſtrong arm had ſhook me from my ſleep.
Trembling I roſe, and wildly gaz'd around
To ſee what region of the dark profound
Held me, a priſoner of the penal deep.

II.

Suſpended high upon the brink of Hell,
Liſt'ning, we ſtood to hear the diſmal yell

Succeſſive

Succeſſive pealing round the world of woe
Downward I gaz'd intent; but gaz'd in vain,
Such darkneſs over-hung the place of pain
Hiding the horrid viſion far below.

III.

Ev'n MARO ſhew'd the ſigns of pale diſmay,
And cry'd, "down hither lies our fated way!"
While I, alarm'd with his contagious hue
Fault'ring reply'd, "if daſtard fear control
On Hell's dread verge, the diſembodied ſoul,
Shall mortal man the dang'rous path purſue?"

IV.

"Not fear, but pity," the mild ſpirit ſaid,
For thoſe, for thoſe in yon ambiguous ſhade
Exiles of Glory! touch'd my heart with pain!
But haſte, a tedious way before us lies."
He ſpoke, I follow'd, ſtruck with pale ſurpriſe,
To the firſt region of the dark domain.

V.

V.

Now thro' the void and viewleſs ſhadows drear,
Short ſighs, thick-coming, led the liſt'ning ear,
Trembling in murmurs low along the gale:
No pang is here, no tort'ring hour is known,
Their irrecoverable loſs alone
Matrons, and ſires, and tender babes bewail.

VI.

"And can the mournful train that here abide
Unnotic'd paſs thee by?" the Poet cry'd,
Theſe were the race renown'd of antient time.
Unknown a Saviour, unador'd a God,
Their blind preſumptuous courſe in reaſon's road
They ſtill purſu'd, unconſcious of a crime."

VII.

"No bleeding ranſom of their ſins they knew,*
Nor from the fount regenerative drew

The

* The opinion of the age doomed the Ancient Pagans, however innocent in their lives, to the Infernal World, at leaſt to Hades.

The ſacred ſymbol of eternal joy!
In ceaſeleſs languors now forlorn they dwell,
Not heirs of Heav'n, nor denizens of Hell,
And of their ſad ſociety am I!"

VIII.

Sorrowing I ſtood at the myſterious doom
Of thoſe whoſe names the upper world illume,
And, boldly bent the ſacred depth to ſcan,
I dar'd, ev'n from the dread precincts of death
To ſnatch a proof of our illuſtrious faith,
And thus addreſs'd the venerable man:

IX.

" Say, is there none among the names of old,
In the bright liſts of endleſs life enroll'd?

Had DANTE preſumed to contradict the reigning opinion, his book, and he both, perhaps, would have been condemned to the flames; but he ſteers clear of the dangers, and yet ſecures himſelf from the charge of a rigid and indiſcriminating ſuperſtition, by inventing a kind of ELYSIUM for the virtuous Ancients, and for thoſe who had died before the birth of our Saviour.

None

None dar'd a Saviour, nor himſelf to plead?"
MARO reply'd, " ſcarce on the ſhadowy coaſt
My ſoul arriv'd, when lo! a num'rous hoſt
Selected hence, a chief triumphant led.

X.

The van were thoſe that liv'd before the flood.
Conſpicuous there the MAN* of EDEN ſtood
With † him whoſe blood the recent earth defil'd,
He, ‡ whoſe rapt eye the coming deluge ſaw,
Follow'd behind; and he § that held in awe
The ſons of ISRAEL in th' ARABIAN wild.

XI.

" Then! He ** who with his ſmall domeſtic band
Follow d the viſion of the promis'd land
Thro' many a ſmiling plain to JORDAN's ſhore;
††He that ſo dear the SYRIAN damſel bought,
‡‡His ſpouſe, and they §§ that to their father brought,
The fraudful mantle ſtain'd with ſavage gore.

* Adam—† Abel—‡ Noah—§ Moſes—** Abraham—†† Jacob
‡‡ Rachel—§§ The Sons of Iſrael.

XII.

All theſe, the palm-crown'd chief, and thouſands more,
Glean'd from the wild depopulated ſhore,
Where Saviour's foot before had never been."
Converſing thus we met the countleſs train
Whoſe ſhadowy ſquadrons hid the groaning plain,
And ſtood aſtoniſh'd at the living ſcene.

XIII.

'Till, glimm'ring on the verge of antient night,
Afar we ſpy'd a faint, deceitful light
Veſting the nether world in twilight grey:
Where many a ſpirit fam'd in ancient time,
From many an old, and celebrated clime
The dim Battalia form'd in deep array.

XIV.

"Say, MANTUAN! why in yon' diſtinguiſh'd race,
Such characters are ſeen of heav'nly grace,

That

That ſcarce they ſeem the penal ſcourge to feel?"
I ſpoke, and thus the mild conducting ſhade,
"Becauſe their names, from age to age convey'd,
Bear the bright ſtamp of Fame's eternal ſeal."

XV.

Then, "hail! returning Bard" was heard around
From many a deep, harmonious voice to ſound,
"Behold at length the matchleſs Bard returns;"
Soon thoſe from whom the ſalutation came
Four ſhadowy chiefs appear'd, of mighty name,
Too grave they ſeem'd for joy, too wiſe to mourn.

XVI.

"Yon' martial form behold!" the Mantuan ſaid
See in his hand the viſionary blade!
Seems he not born the weight of hoſts to wield?
'Tis mighty HOMER, firſt of bards! who ſung
How on the flying rear ACHILLES hung
And all the terrors of SCAMANDER's field!

XVII.

XVII.

Near him, * the maſter of the Latian Lyre,
Who civiliz'd the rude SATYRIC Choir,
And bade them mingle with the poliſh'd throng;
And mighty LUCAN, ſtain'd with civil blood,
With him † who to the ſwans on ISTER's flood
In exile ſung his ſweetly plaintive ſong!

XVIII.

Thus, joint partakers of the muſe's flame,
And held in concord by her hallow'd name,
None here neglects the mutual honours due."
More had the Poet ſaid, but now at hand
Slowly approach the ſmall ſelected band,
And hail the heav'n-aſpiring Bard anew.

* HORACE. † OVID.

XIX.

Some time apart, in ſecret deep debate
Retir'd the maſters of the muſe's ſtate.
Then, turning all to me, with kind regard,
In that bright band my humble name enroll'd.
Such haughty honour far unfit to hold
Thus with immortals mixt, a mortal bard!

XX.

Thro' the dim ſhades we paſt, of waning night
To the glad precincts of the chearful light;
Talking of things, for mortal ear unmeet.
But now in front, a tow'ry caſtle frown'd,
Deep, deep immur'd within a ſeven-fold mound
And ſeven ſwift torrents lav'd her hallow'd feet.

XXI.

The wondrous flood our trembling ſteps upbore;
And now, arriv'd upon the further ſhore,

Seven

Seven portals huge, we paſs with ſounding tread;
Then, meads where ſpring eternal ſeem'd to reign,
Where walk'd in crowds a fair and noble train
Of port ſuperior to the vulgar dead.

XXII.

The grave-ey'd chiefs within the verge of light
Conſpicuous mov'd before my raptur'd ſight.
Converſing deep, in accents ſoft and ſlow,
ÆNEAS there, and HECTOR's helmed ſhade
ELECTRA, with the fair LAVINIAN maid,
With thouſands following, rang'd the fields below.

XXIII.

I ſaw the AMAZONS, a matchleſs pair,
PENTHESILEA here, CAMILLA there;
One ſtood for TROY, and one the race defy'd.
I mark'd the mild and venerable face
Of the firſt founder of the Latin race,
And bluſhing near the Trojan's lovely bride.

XXIV.

XXIV.

LUCRETIA too, who fell her fame to ſave,
And * JULIA, doom'd to fill an early grave,
With fair CORNELIA, join'd their ſlaughter'd Lord.
There MARCIA with her ſtoic huſband † ſat,
Who ſeem'd intrepid ſtill to brave his fate,
And proudly graſp'd a viſionary ſword.

XXV.

Old JUNIUS ‡ there, who ſhed the Tyrant's blood,
Still ſeem'd to keep his ſtern, unalter'd mood;
And CÆSAR clad in mail, with falcon eye.
There in barbaric ſolitude alone
Stood ſhe § who ſhook the SOLYMEAN throne,
And held her Lord ¶ in long captivity.

* Julia and Cornelia, the two Wives of Pompey. † Cato. ‡ The elder Brutus. § Saladin. ¶ Guy de Luſignan, the laſt Chriſtian King of Jeruſalem.

XXVI.

Afar the * maſter of the ſtudious ſect,
Who taught fair truth from falſhood to ſelect,
His pupils led; and near, his reverend Sire,
Bleſt SOCRATES, who drain'd the deadly bowl,
Stood rapt † the mighty academic ſoul,
While the proud ‡ CYNIC burnt with ſecret fire.

XXVII.

Here, ſerious now, appear'd the laughing § ſage,
And he, ¶ who ceaſeleſs mourn'd an impious age,
Now both the ſame eternal tenor keep.
The ‖ Lyriſt too, renown'd in days of yore,
Tries the ſweet charm of melody no more
To bid the liſt'ning ſons of HADES weep.

* Ariſtotle. † Plato. ‡ Diogenes. § Democritus. ¶ Heraclitus. ‖ Orpheus.

XXVIII.

XXVIII.

TULLY his Roman audience ſtill harangues,
Still on his lips the liſt'ning Senate hangs,
While newly ſeap'd the tyrant's bloody ſteel,
The Moraliſt,* a pale exhauſted ſhade
Shews his torn veins, and points the reeking blade,
Like one that ſeems the ling'ring wound to feel.

XXIX.

THALES I ſaw the ſons of ſcience guide,
EMPEDOCLES and ZENO ſide by ſide,
And EUCLID there, and PTOLEMY I knew,
GALEN, HIPPOCRATES, and AVICEN,
And ſage AVERRHOES, whoſe ſkilful pen
At larger length his mighty maſter drew.

* SENECA.

XXX.

Onward we paſs'd, and ſaw a countleſs train
Scorning the limits of a mortal ſtrain,
And, loth to leave the bounds of chearful light.
Sorrowing, at laſt we took a long farewell,
And haſten'd downward where th' apoſtates dwell
Deep in the boſom of primæval night.

END OF THE FOURTH CANTO.

CANTO THE FIFTH,

ARGUMENT,

The Travellers descend to the second Region, where they find the Tribunal of Minos, and observe his extraordinary method of pronouncing Sentence; thence they find their way to the place where the Votaries of lawless Love are punished, among whom DANTE *meets the Spirits of* PAULO *and* FRANCOSIA, *a noble pair of* RAVENNA, *whose affecting Story closes the Canto.*

CANTO THE FIFTH.

OF leſs extent, a region now appear'd,
But ſhriller ſhrieks of anguiſh thence were heard,
For MINOS there the ſoul impleaded hears.
Their ſtern examinant their hidden crimes
Explores, and inſtant to the ſeveral climes
His ſtruggling charge the grim attendant bears.

II.

The trembling ſhade attends the awful call,
And to his frowning judge confeſſes all,
And ſtill a ſignal dire the ſentence ſhews.
A burniſh'd Dragon wraps the Judge around,
And each blue ſpire about his boſom wound,
Marks a gradation of infernal woes.

III.

III.

Inceſſant crowds the awful preſence throng,
And ſtill the grieſly miniſter along
Bears the ſad priſoner to the nether goal.
Soon MINOS view'd us thro' the ſhades of night,
And, pauſing at the unaccuſtom'd light,
Left in ſuſpenſe the pale, indicted ſoul.

IV.

" Let no vain promiſes thy faith betray,
Nor let the ſmooth deſcent, and eaſy way
Allure thy feet, (exclaim'd the Judge afar)
Down to the womb of unrefunding night,
For thence in vain thou ſeek'ſt the realms of night,
Where Hell's dark miniſters the paſſage bar."

V.

" Commiſſion'd by his word, whoſe will is fate,
Thro' all the horrors of the Stygian ſtate

Secure

Secure we ſtray," the Mantuan bard replies,
Nor added more, for plaintive ſtrains of woe
Commixt with ſtruggling ſtorms, were heard below,
Loud as when NEPTUNE ſcales the bending ſkies.

VI.

The tempeſt raves around, and borne on high,
On its black wing the wailing ſhadows fly,
Daſh'd wide, and devious thro' the darkſome air,
*'Till o'er the central gulph of HADES hung
In loud diſtreſsful cries, the falling throng,
Blaſpheme their ſov'reign, and atteſt their fear.

VII.

Theſe were the hapleſs ſlaves of lawleſs love,
Soft pleaſure's vot'ries in the world above,

* The Tranſlator here follows the interpretation of the CRUSCA Edition as the moſt poetical.

Who

Who the ſtill voice of reaſon held in ſcorn.
And as a flight of ſtarlings wing their way,
Riding the wintry blaſt in long array,
The phantoms fleet, in airy tumults borne,

VIII.

Aloft we ſaw the moody revel ride,
Then, in long eddies like the ſwallowing tide,
With its full freight the hurricane deſcends.
Around the ſinners ſweep, above, below,
Nor reſpite of their cares nor refuge know
From the reſiſtleſs ſtorm that never ends.

IX.

As cranes, ſagacious of the ſeaſon, plan
In ſhadowy files their plumy caravan;
Then mount, all clam'rous, and obſcure the day:
Thus in black bands the diſſipated ſwarm,
Warping innum'rous on the coming ſtorm,
Tune to the piping winds their doleful lay.

X.

X.

" Say, who are thoſe around the troubled ſphere,
Scourg'd by the viewleſs demons of the air;
Oh! Bard," I cry'd, " their names indulgent tell!
" Mark her," he cry'd, " the foremoſt of the throng
The queen of many a realm, and barbarous tongue,
By HER betray'd the mighty NINUS fell.

XI.

Her impious court the ſoft example ſhew'd,
Thence, far and wide, the deep infection flow'd,
Pleaſure's ſoft whiſper was the voice of law.
At once to check the lib'ral tongue of blame,
Induſtrious ſhe diffus'd the gen'ral ſhame,
Till truth and juſtice loſt their wonted awe.

XII.

See where † ſhe ſhoots along in ruin roll'd,
The mighty queen, renown'd in legends old,

For

† The ſtory of SEMIRAMIS, here alluded to, is, that told by JUSTIN and CTESIAS, viz: That having prevailed on her huſband

For the great ſceptre by her lord beſtow'd!
ASSYRIA'S antient ſtate, and BABEL'S plain,
With all that mighty realm compos'd her reign,
Where now the SOLDAN ſways the regal rod!

XIII.

There ſcreaming flits along † ELIZA'S ghoſt
That on herſelf reveng'd the lover loſt:
There Ægypt's wanton Queen ‡ aſcending ſoars.
Next I beheld the Spartan Dame § appear,
The common peſt of many a rolling year,
While mutual ſlaughter dy'd Scamander's ſhore.

NINUS, to give the reins of government to her for one day, ſhe took an opportunity of ending his reign and life together.

† DIDO, the celebrated Queen of Carthage.---See her more authentic ſtory in Mr. Hayley's curious extracts from the ARAUCANA, in the Notes to his Eſſay on Epic Poetry.

‡ The miſtreſs of JULIUS CÆSAR and ANTHONY, and one who might have been miſtreſs of the world, had it not been for the averſion the Romans entertained to the *royal name*.---See the affecting ſituation of TITUS in RACINE'S BERENICE, when he is obliged to diſmiſs the Queen, on the eve of their nuptials, in order to appeaſe the Senate.

§ HELEN of TROY.

XIV.

XIV.

† Achilles too, by love to ruin led,
Paris I ſpy'd, and ‡ Triſtram's gory ſhade,
And ſtill each coming ghoſt the poet nam'd.
To ſee this wreck of ſouls my heart recoil'd.
At length, "O call that pair, § thou ſpirit mild,
That ſkims ſo light before the blaſt untam'd!

† This alludes to the Story of his falling in love with POLYXENA, the daughter of PRIAM, and being treacherouſly killed by PARIS, as he was celebrating the nuptials in the Temple of APOLLO.

‡ Or TRESTRAM DE LEON, one of the Knights of Arthur's Round Table, and nephew to MARKE, King of Cornwall. He was killed in conſequence of a criminal intercourſe with his uncle's wife, wife, La Belle Iſonde.—See the death of Arthur, Part II.

§ This Lady was daughter to Guido de Polenta, Lord of Ravenna, the generous patron of DANTE. She was betrothed to Paulo Malitesta, an amiable youth, younger brother to the Lord of Rimini, but was obliged to marry Lanciotto the elder, a man of ſavage diſpoſition, and deformed in perſon, but daring in the field. The ſequel of their ſtory concludes the Canto.

XV.

"Soon may'ſt thou know," he cry'd, "the tide of air
Brings to our lofty ſtand the hapleſs pair;
Do thou adjure them by their mutual flame
To tell their woes, their woes they ſoon will tell."
He ſpoke. Aſcending from the depths of Hell,
Riding the blaſt, the wailing lovers came.

XVI.

Then I. "Afflicted pair! deſcend and ſay,
Why thus ye mourn?" The gentle ghoſts obey,
And light, attentive to my warm requeſt.
As, with her faithful mate, the turtle-dove
Deſcends, obedient to the call of love,
On ſteady wing, and ſeeks the nuptial neſt.

XVII.

DIDO they left, that led the num'rous flight,
And thro' the ſhadows of eternal night

Struck by the potent charm the lovers came.
" Mortal, they cry'd, whoſe friendly thoughts impel
Thy feet to wander thro' the ſhades of Hell
To learn our woes, the ſad recital claim!

XVIII.

And could the fervent pray'rs that hence ariſe,
Bend the ſtern Ruler of the diſtant ſkies,
Thine were the joys of everlaſting reſt!
So ſweet the pauſe thy adjurations gain
For us, ill-fated pair, untimely ſlain
Where PADUS rolls the tribute of the weſt!

XIX.

This mangled form was fated to inſpire
The gentle PAULO's breaſt with am'rous fire.
From his to mine the ſoft infection ſpread.
Too ſoon the fatal ſecret I divin'd;
Too ſoon with his my guilty wiſh combin'd,
Wretch that I was! who ſhar'd his brother's bed!"

XX.

XX.

Love link'd our ſouls above, and links below,
But, far beneath, in ſcenes of deeper woe
The eldeſt murth'rer and his mates prepare
Already to receive the ruffian's ſoul:
Where *Caina* reaches to the nether pole
With Fratricides the penal doom to ſhare."

XXI.

She paus'd, and her eternal plaints renew'd;
Struck with her hapleſs tale I muſing ſtood:
"Why penſive thus?" the gentle bard enquir'd;
Then I: "Could aught the captive ſouls perſuade
To tell the trains for their ſeduction laid,
Millions might ſhun their fate, by Heav'n inſpir'd."

XXII.

Then turning round to view the hapleſs pair,
Sighing, I thus addreſs'd the weeping fair:—

"How

"How ſad th' atonement of thy guilty joys!
But ſay, how firſt you ſaw his paſſion grow.
What buſy demon taught thee firſt to know
The ſecret meaning of his ſmother'd ſighs."

XXIII.

She wept, and "Oh! how grievous to relate
Paſt joys, and tread again the paths of fate
Let him who ſung ELIZA's woes declare.
But ſince unfated ſtill, the wiſh remains
To know the ſource of our eternal pains,
Thou ſhalt not vainly breathe the pious pray'r.

XXIV.

One day (a day I ever muſt deplore!)
The gentle youth, to ſpend a vacant hour,
To me the ſoft ſeducing ſtory read
Of LAUNCELOT and fair GENEURA's love,
While faſcinating all the quiet grove
Fallacious Peace her ſnares around us ſpread.

XXV.

Too much I found th' inſidious volume charm,
And PAULO's mantling bluſhes riſing warm;
Still as he read the guilty ſecret told.
Soon from the line his eyes began to ſtray;
Soon did my yielding looks my heart betray,
Nor needed words our wiſhes to unfold.

XXVI.

Eager to realize the ſtory'd bliſs,
Trembling he ſnatch'd the half-reſented kiſs,
To ill ſoon leſſon'd by the pandar-page!
Vile pandar-page! it ſmooth'd the paths of ſhame."
While thus ſhe ſpoke, the partner of her flame
Tun'd his deep ſorrows to the whirlwind's rage.

XXVII.

So full the ſymphony of grief aroſe,
My heart, reſponſive to the lovers woes

With

With thrilling ſympathy convuls'd my breaſt.
Too ſtrong at laſt for life my paſſion grew,
And, ſick'ning at the lamentable view,
I fell, like one by mortal pangs oppreſs'd.

END OF THE FIFTH CANTO.

CANTO THE SIXTH.

ARGUMENT.

Leaving the LOVER'S LOT, *and journeying ſtill downwards, the Poets find the Gulf of* EPICURISM, *where* DANTE *is known by the Soul of a noble* FLORENTINE, *named* CIACCO, *who diſcloſes to him ſome revolutions ſoon to take place in their native Republic. On paſſing this Region* DANTE *makes ſome Enquiries relative to the State of Things after the Reſurrection, which are anſwered by the* MANTUAN *Poet, and the conſequences of the final Judgment explained from Analogy.*

CANTO THE SIXTH.

LONG in the arms of Death entranc'd I lay.—
At length the vital current found its way;
When other regions, fraught with other woes,
Far ſeen beneath, amaz'd my ſtartled ſight:
Obſcure, the Champaign frown'd in native night,
And deeper plagues their deadly ſtores diſcloſe.

II.

The proſpect low'rs beneath eternal ſtorms,
Dire, vollied hail, the hoary ſcene deforms,
And drifted ſnows their endleſs rigour keep.
Dark ruin hurtles thro' the duſky air,
Foul ſteams ariſe and fill the troubled ſphere,
Inceſſant floating round the awful ſteep.

III.

III.

Hell's bloodhound there his triple form extends,
And ever and anon the ſavage rends
Some wand'ring wretch, and dyes his fangs in gore;
His flaming eyes the troubled deep ſurvey,
Loud gnaſh his teeth and hold the damn'd at bay,
Whoſe captive bands in vain his rage deplore.

IV.

The founder'd crew bewail the bitter ſhow'r,
Loud barks the fiend; his flaming eye-balls lour,
Still as the wretches ſhift the tortur'd ſide.
Rolling innum'rous thro' the dark profound,
Their yells canine th' aſtoniſh'd hearing wound;
At length our ſteps the dog of darkneſs ſpy'd.

V.

His triple head aloft the ſavage rear'd:
His fangs, a triple row of fate, appear'd,

And

And all the man forſook my ſinking frame.
But MARO, ſtooping, ſeiz'd the fatal mould,
The magic morſel ſoon his rage controll'd,
And down he ſunk, exhauſted, weak, and tame.

VI.

As when a mongrel quits his nightly guard,
When the dark felon deals the wiſh'd reward,
And charms the ceaſeleſs terrors of his tongue;
So found the fiend his wonted wrath aſſuage:
His eyes had loſt their flame, his fangs their rage,
And ſilence o'er the deep a moment hung.

VII.

The captive crew the wondrous pauſe admire,
Now firſt untortur'd by his clamours dire.
At length arriving on the bounds of pain,
Thro' their wide flound'ring forms amaz'd we paſs'd,
Extended, bare, beneath the bitter blaſt,
Whoſe dread artill'ry beat the groaning plain.

VIII.

Mocking the touch, the heav'n-abandon'd hoſt,
A foul encampment! fill'd the ſpacious coaſt.
A voice at length the horrid ſilence broke;
Where a pale pris'ner ſeem'd his head to raiſe,
And view my earthly form with fix'd amaze;
While thus with feeble voice the phantom ſpoke:

IX.

" Say! hardy wand'rer thro' the realms of pain,
Does any trace or lineament remain,
To wake the mem'ry of a friend once dear?
A while our vital threads together ran."
" In vain, I cry'd, I trace thy viſage wan,
Where nought but characters of hell appear.

X.

Tell who thou art, and what th' ignoble crime
That chains thy limbs in this contagious clime,

Amon

Among the foulest stigmatics of Hell?"
I spoke, and thus th'afflicted soul rejoin'd:
"*Florence*, whose broad-blown crimes infect the wind,
Saw me within her vile enclosure dwell.

XI.

While yet I breath'd the sweet *Hesperian* air,
Ere doom'd the bitter-beating storm to bear,
At feasts well known, CIACCO * was my name;
Nor mine a voice that solitary wails,
Here thousands fill the deep *Cimmerian* vales,
For foul intemp'rance doom'd to equal shame."

XII.

Sighing, I answer'd, "Could my tears assuage
This deadly tempest of eternal rage,

* *Ciacco*, or *Guiotto*, a noble Florentine, noted for intemperance; thence he got the nickname of CIACCO, i. e. *The Hog*.——For some entertaining particulars of him, see the story of *Philippo Argenti*, in the notes on the Eighth Canto.

Ceaseless,

Ceaſeleſs, for thee, my tears ſhould learn to flow:
But ſay what ills yon factious walls await?—
Since Diſcord breathes her poiſon through the ſtat
Lives there a man whoſe worth can ward the blow

XIII.

Then he, " The wordy war ſhall end in blood;
Whence the ſtrong hunter * of the *Aconian* wood
" Cries, *Havock!* and lets ſlip his dogs of war."
Three ſuns ſhall ſee him rule the ſubject plain,
'Till *Valois*, hov'ring on the *Tuſcan* main,
Shall turn the ſcale and chaſe the tyrant far.

* *Cherchi* of Florence, the head of the White Faction, of a
mily not ſo remarkable for their antiquity as their opulence.
antagoniſt, *Donate*, who headed the Black Faction, was of an
trious family, but indigent. For the riſe and hiſtory of theſe
tions, ſee the Florentine Hiſtory annexed, and the Life of D
who, for his partiality to the White Faction during his go
ment, was baniſhed.

It is to be obſerved, that the Poet dates this viſion in his
fifth year, before his baniſhment; hence Ciacco ſpeaks to him
prophetical ſtrain.

XIV.

Long ſhall the Victor ſhow his haughty brow,
The foe beneath his iron hand ſhall bow;
In vain I ſee and mourn their rigid doom!
Two patriots ſtill remain; but ſavage Force,
And Pride, and Av'rice, check their noble courſe,
And with confed'rate flames the ſtate conſume."

XV.

He ceas'd, and I reſum'd my ardent pray'r:
Yet to thy friend a fleeting moment ſpare,
Corina's lot, and *Tegghio*'s doom to tell;
Frigo, *Moſea*, and *Jacobo*'s fate *;
Here, below, the tort'ring hour they wait,
Or near the ſprings of endleſs pleaſure dwell?

* The ſtories of theſe characters ſhall all be told under their reſpective allotments.

The puniſhment of intemperance may ſeem rather too ſevere, as its conſequences rather affect the criminal himſelf than ſociety.—Luxury indeed gives life to commerce, and birth to a variety of arts, but it is often ſupported by oppreſſion, and often by fraud, and the moſt detrimental to ſociety; and the ruin which luxury brings on one man of opulence, particularly in a commercial country muſt affect thouſands.

XVI.

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But ſay what ills yon factious walls await?—
Since Diſcord breathes her poiſon through the ſtate
Lives there a man whoſe worth can ward the blow?

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'Till *Valois*, hov'ring on the *Tuſcan* main,
Shall turn the ſcale and chaſe the tyrant far.

* *Cherchi* of Florence, the head of the White Faction, of a family not ſo remarkable for their antiquity as their opulence. His antagoniſt, *Donate*, who headed the Black Faction, was of an illuſtrious family, but indigent. For the riſe and hiſtory of theſe factions, ſee the Florentine Hiſtory annexed, and the Life of Dante, who, for his partiality to the White Faction during his government, was baniſhed.

It is to be obſerved, that the Poet dates this viſion in his thirty-fifth year, before his baniſhment; hence Ciacco ſpeaks to him in a prophetical ſtrain.

XIV

XIV.

Long ſhall the Victor ſhow his haughty brow,
The foe beneath his iron hand ſhall bow;
In vain I ſee and mourn their rigid doom!
Two patriots ſtill remain; but ſavage Force,
And Pride, and Av'rice, check their noble courſe,
And with confed'rate flames the ſtate conſume."

XV.

He ceas'd, and I reſum'd my ardent pray'r:
"Yet to thy friend a fleeting moment ſpare,
Farina's lot, and *Tegghio*'s doom to tell;
Arrigo, *Moſea*, and *Jacobo*'s fate *;
If here, below, the tort'ring hour they wait,
Or near the ſprings of endleſs pleaſure dwell?

* The ſtories of theſe characters ſhall all be told under their reſpective allotments.

The puniſhment of intemperance may ſeem rather too ſevere, as its conſequences rather affect the criminal himſelf than ſociety.—Luxury indeed gives life to commerce, and birth to a variety of trades, but it is often ſupported by oppreſſion, and often by fraud, evils the moſt detrimental to ſociety; and the ruin which luxury brings on one man of opulence, particularly in a commercial country, muſt affect thouſands.

XVI.

XVI.

Where ſhall I find thoſe ſouls ſo high renown'd?"
" Far hence, he cried, in darkeſt durance bound,
For various ſins, in various climes confin'd.
That path leads downward to their dark abode,
Where human foot before hath never trode,
Still many a darkſome league thy feet muſt winde

XVII.

And Oh! if e'er thou view'ſt the golden ſky;
Let not my name in dark oblivion lye;
No more I aſk, and thou enquire no more."—
He turn'd, yet eyed me ſtill with look aſkance;
Then with his brethren ſunk in torpid trance,
And ſilence reign'd along the diſmal ſhore.

XVIII.

" Thoſe, cried the Bard, ſhall ſlumber out their fat
'Till, from the confines of the heav'nly ſtate,

The Hierarch's trump ſhall thunder thro' the deep:
Then, cloath'd again in veſts of humble clay,
The hideous band ſhall riſe upon the day,
And down return, their endleſs doom to weep."

XIX.

Then through the dark moraſs we pick'd our way,
Where, vex'd with ſtorms, the feſtal ſquadrons lay,
Reas'ning in ſage debate on future things.
Then I, "Shall equal plagues the damn'd await;
Shall Hell encreaſe her torments, or abate,
When the laſt charge their final ſentence brings?"

XX.

"Let Science ſolve the doubt, the Bard rejoin'd,
The body married to th' immortal mind,
Or higher tranſport feels, or fiercer woe:
Then th' ignoble brethren of the ſty,
When the laſt clarion ſhakes the vaulted ſky
Shall feel their pains ſublim'd, their tortures grow."

XXI.

XXI.

Far thence, the fearful verge we walk'd around,
Converſing ſad, or wrapt in thought profound,
On myſtic things unmeet for mortal ſtrain.
At length, arriving where the ſhelving ſteep
By eaſy ſlope reſign'd us to the deep,
We ſaw where PLUTO rul'd the dark domain.

END OF THE SIXTH CANTO.

CANTO THE SEVENTH.

ARGUMENT.

DANTE *arrives at the fourth Region, where, under the immediate Government of* PLUTO, *(probably* PLUTUS, *the fabled God of Riches) he finds the Souls of Misers and Prodigals, and describes their singular Employment.—Thence he proceeds to the fifth Region, where, in different departments, suited to their offences, he finds the Spirits of those who were condemned for Deeds of ungovernable Rage, for Selfishness, Envy, or habits of inveterate Malice.*

CANTO THE SEVENTH.

"PRINCE of the Fiends," a voice exclaim'd,
" ariſe ;
Behold thy realms expos'd to mortal eyes!"
It ceas'd, the Bard my riſing fears repreſt.
" Fear not," he cry'd, but ſtill purſue thy way,
He boaſts no pow'r thy voyage to delay
To the dark regions of the world unbleſt.

II:

Then turning to the Fiend with high diſdain,
" Ceaſe, Hell-hound, ceaſe! thy boiling rage contain ;
Haſt thou forgot the fierce avenging ſword
On thy afflicted rear, when MICHAEL hung
Know Heav'n's beheſt! and rein thy impious tongue,
He comes obedient to the almighty word."

III.

As the calm'd veſſel furls her woven wings,
As round her maſt the flagging canvaſs clings,
The ſwarthy SATRAP ſooth'd his ſwelling ire:
Then coaſting wide around the awful ſteep,
We ſaw below th' interminable deep
Where all the plagues of either world conſpire.

IV.

Juſtice of Heav'n! from thine avenging hand
What nameleſs toils and tortures fill the ſtrand!
Ah! why on mortal failings ſo ſevere!
As SCYLLA's rocks the thund'ring ſurge repel
A ceaſeleſs journey in the depths of Hell,
With deadly tumult ſhook the nether ſphere.

V.

Legions on legions round the diſmal coaſt,
With lamentable cries from poſt to poſt

Roll'd

Roll'd the metallic maſs along the plain.
Up the ſteep ſides the pondrous globes aſcend
Above, the ſons of diſſipation ſend
In ruin down the pond'rous globes again.

VI.

"Ah! why this cruel ſport, the miſers cry?
Why this vain toil, the prodigals reply,
Againſt the hill to heave the ſlipp'ry oar?"
Again the mighty combatants retreat,
Again in cumbrous tournament they meet,
Echoing the doleful dirge from ſhore to ſhore.

VII.

"What monſtrous tale do yon' employments tell,
* Are all the ABBIES empty'd into Hell?"

* From the number of Clerical Tonſures ſeen among them.

Wond'ring

Wond'ring, I cry'd, and thus the MANTUAN ſwain:
" Theſe hoſtile tribes lament their bitter doom,
Who liv'd above, in intellectual gloom,
The ſlaves of wild expence, or ſordid gain.

VIII.

Mark where they meet, on yonder plain afar,
Their diff'rent ſongs the ſignals of the war!
And learn their ſeveral clans, their leaders names.
Yon' heads that fluctuate on the face of night,
Whoſe poliſh'd fronts reflects a dubious light,
With reverend mitres once conceal'd their ſhame.

IX.

Their griping hands the ſacred ſtores confeſt."
Then I: " Oh tell! among thoſe ſhades unbleſt,
Is there no form familiar to my ſight?"
Mild he reply'd, " Their late ignoble fall
Has ſpread a dark reſemblance over all,
Nor leſs their labours in the womb of night.

X.

X.

But, when the trump of doom ſhall rend the air,
Yon' prodigals ſhall riſe with horrent hair,
And known by ſealed hands, the ſaving crew.
In exile now they mourn their gifts abus'd,
Or tempeſt all the deep in fray confus'd,
A ſcene unknown before to fancy's view.

XI.

Learn hence of mortal things how vain the boaſt,
Learn to deſpiſe the low degen'rate hoſt,
And ſee their wealth how poor, how mean their pride.
Not all the mines below the wand'ring moon,
Not all the ſun beholds at higheſt noon,
Can for a moment bid the fray ſubſide.

XII.

Muſing, I cry'd, " Oh Fortune! viewleſs pow'r!
Whoſe flitting gifts purſue the changeful hour:
Say, whence thou art?"—when thus the Bard renown'd:
" See, thoughtleſs man! the hand that wheels the ſpheres,
Where each to each the radiant bounty ſhares,
Dealing the portion'd light to worlds around."

XIII.

Fortune, his Delegate, with equal hand
Thus ſcatters bleſſings from her lofty ſtand,
Diſperſing round the globe her travel'd boon.
From realm to realm the varied bounties run;
In vain the father keeps them for his ſon,
Faſt they forſake him with the waning moon.

XIV.

To thoſe her ſmiles diſpenſe a vernal bloom,
While theſe unnoted pine in winter's gloom;
And, as ſhe * fleets away, the ſummer fades;
Faſt changing ſtates her mighty march proclaim:
Ev'n wiſdom ſinks before her dreaded name
When her wide charge her eagle eye pervades.

XV.

With mighty hand the ſubject orb ſhe rolls,
No chance her unrelenting ſway controls,

* This compariſon of the diſpenſations of Fortune, with the progreſs of the ſeaſons, is equally juſt and beautiful. There might be a very pretty Poem written on the compariſon of the effects of the different ſeaſons to the ſtates of life that reſemble them. In winter the ſun kindly withdraws its influence, that the ſoil may recover that vigour which had been exhauſted in ſpring and ſummer. Thus a ſtate of indigence calls forth thoſe talents and ripens that genius, which proſperity perhaps would have extinguiſhed. Where theſe ſorts of revolutions happen moſt frequently (as in a commercial and free nation) the character of the people riſes, and they grow eminent in arts and arms; but if we were to ſuppoſe for a moment one order of men always to enjoy accumulated riches, and the other always depreſſed in poverty, by an uniform ſentence, the ſpirit of enterprize would be quite extinct; the one part of the world would be immerſed in vice, and the other ſunk in ſlavery.

Fate

Fate urging on her courſe with angels ſpeed.
By turns her ſubjects mount, by turns they call,
Loud curſes on her name for ever fall,
While ſhe regardleſs runs her path decreed.

XVI.

The murmurs deep of yonder moody ſphere
In vain aſpire to reach her hallow'd ear.
For ever liſt'ning to the choral ſong
Of thoſe who turn the mighty mundane wheel,
Not doom'd the thrilling ſhaft of woe to feel,
And urging ſtill their flaming orbs along.

XVII.

But haſte we hence, a darker lot to mourn.
The planet now has reach'd his weſtern bourne,
That ſaw our toils begin with riſing day.
Thro' yonder ruin'd cliffs the bellowing deep
With hoarſe din tumbling down from ſteep to ſteep,
With hollow murmurs mines our fated way.

XVIII.

XVIII.

Wafted in darkneſs down the pitchy wave,
We ſaw the STYGIAN pool her borders lave,
Fed by th' aſtounding cataract on high.
Far, far below we ſpy'd the ſullen flood,
And round her borders, half immers'd in mud,
We ſaw two ſquadrons charge with frantic cry.

XIX.

Burning with rage, but impotent of hand,
Naked they meet, and battle round the ſtrand.
Now, head to head, their claſhing fronts engage
Each other, now with lion-ramp they ſpurn,
Then, while beneath their feet the wretches mourn,
Piecemeal they rend their limbs with brutal rage.

XX.

" Learn hence what woes, the ſage conductor ſaid,
Wait the devoted crew by wrath miſled!

See how they wallow round the ſordid ſhore!
Plung'd in the deep, another hideous crew,
Where yonder bubbling pool attracts the view
With ſmother'd groans their wayward fate deplore."

XXI.

I liſten'd, and anon, a ſullen ſound
Came ſtruggling upwards from the pool profound
In words half-form'd, and long reluctant groans.
Joyleſs we view'd the ſun's benignant beam,
Now here we hide beneath the ſullen ſtream,
Where ev'ry joy the envious ſoul diſowns.

XXII.

Afar we coaſted round the lake abhorr'd,
With Envy's baleful brood innum'rous ſtor'd;

* By Accidioſi in the original, is meant the ſelfiſh or Miſanthropes, as well as the envious, as appears from the PURGATORIO, where, when the Poet deſcribes the purgation of this very vice, Accidia, he contraſts it with Benevolence. —— See MEMOIRES DE PETRARQUE, Tom. 2. 109.

While,

While, ſtill ſome wretch amid the mantled wave
Panting, renews the ſtory of his woes,
Faſt on the mournful ſong the ſurges cloſe,
And dying curſes round the borders rave.

END OF THE SEVENTH CANTO.

CANTO THE EIGHTH.

ARGUMENT.

In their Paſſage over the POOL *of* ENVY, *in the Boat of* PHLEGYAS, *the Poets meet the Soul of* PHILIPPO ARGENTI, *a noble Florentine, remarkable while alive for his outrageous and brutal paſſions; on the other ſide they find the Metropolis of the* INFERNAL WORLD, *where they apply for entrance in vain.*

CANTO THE EIGHTH.

I.

THE winding path a gloomy fabric ends;
Its heighth with pain the mortal eye aſcends:
Sudden a ſignal flames from either ſpire,
The waves roll pale beneath the livid light;
And, glimmering o'er the waſte of antient night,
Faintly appears the correſponding fire.

II.

" Whence the repeated ſign, and why afar
Reſponſive beams the half-extinguiſh'd ſtar?"—
I aſk'd, and thus the *Mantuan* ſage reply'd:
" The vapours dun, that yonder floods exhale,
Hide from thy mortal eye the coming ſail,
Led by the ſignal from the further ſide."

III.

Swift as the *Parthian* arrow's winged flight,
The lone barque ſkims along the face of night;
Her courſe a ſolitary Pilot ſteers,
Exclaiming loud, " Fell Spirit! art thou come?
Embark! and ſeek thine everlaſting home!"
But Virgil ſaw, and check'd my riſing fears.

IV.

IV.

"*Phlegyas*, he cry'd, thy rancour ſwells in vain,"
We paſs the nether world unknown to pain:
And thy fleet barge is ſent our way to ſpeed."
As one that feels his warmeſt hopes betray'd,
So look'd, and ſo exclaim'd, the wrathful ſhade,
When MARO trode the deck devoid of dread.

V.

The groaning barge confeſt unuſual weight,
Her yielding timbers ſcarce ſuſtain'd the freight,
Plowing the ſable ſurge with plunging prow.
And now the keel divides the middle flood;
When riſing formleſs, from th' abyſs of mud,
Sudden, a ghaſtly phantom ſeem'd to grow.

VI.

" Why wert thou thus condemn'd before thy time?"
He cry'd:—I anſwer'd from the deck ſublime:
" Commiſſion'd here, I come, but not to ſtay.
But what foul ſhape art thou, that ſtops my path?"
He anſwers, " One that mourns the ſecond death."
And ſoon the well-known ſounds the wretch betray.

VII.

With look averſe I cry'd, " Devoted ſhade,
Go mourn thy lot:—Among the ſelf-betray'd,
Too well I know thee thro' the foul diſguiſe."
Inſtant, with eager hand, he ſeiz'd the prow *;
Bold *Maro* puſh'd him to the lake below;
Then claſp'd me round with loud exulting cries.

VIII.

* The name of this angry ſpirit was *Philippo Argente*, ſo called becauſe he uſed to have his horſe ſhod with ſilver.—His brutal paſſions

VIII.

" Bleſt ſoul! that ſpurn'ſt at ſin with virtuous ſcorn;
And bleſt be ſhe of whom ſuch worth was born!

You

ſions made him the inſtrument of a ludicrous revenge, inflicted by the celebrated *Ciacco* (See Canto vi.) on *Biondello*, another epicure of Florence. The ſtory is that told by *Boccacio*, in his *Decamerone*.

" There dwelt in Florence a gentleman, known by the name of *Guiacco*, or *Ciacco*, one ſo fond of good living, that his whole fortune was barely ſufficient to ſupply the expences of his table. As he frequented the firſt company, he was remarkable for a good addreſs and agreeable converſation, with a tincture of that *modeſt aſſurance* that does not always wait for invitation. One of his contemporaries in Florence was Biondello, one of the moſt finiſhed beaus of the 13th century. " He was (in the words of the old tranſlation) " very low of ſtature, yet comely form'd; more neat and briſk than " a butterfly, always wearing a wrought ſilk night-cap on his head, " and not a hair ſtanding out of order but the tuft (or tupee) flow- " ing above the forehead:" and in the article of good living, he was another *Ciacco*.

" One morning in Lent, as he was cheapening two lampreys in the fiſh-market, he happened to ſee *Ciacco*, in a reverie of morning contemplation on the beauty of the ſurrounding objects. Biondello's purchaſe awoke him from his dream; he enquired eagerly for whom

was

Yon caitiff ſee, by ceaſeleſs rage poſſeſt:
Ere his deteſted life had reach'd her goal,
No ſpark of goodneſs chear'd his gloomy ſoul,
And furious ſtill he walks the *Stygian* waſte.

IX.

was that delicious fare? The other named *Viero de Cherchi*, one of the heads of the city; and added, that three other lampreys, a turbot, and a ſturgeon, were the bill of fare for the day; and that a ſelect company were invited. Then he very gravely aſked Ciacco if he intended to make one? He readily anſwered, "You know I al-"ways am welcome there." Biondello named the hour of dinner; and, punctual to a minute, Ciacco attended. He found Viero engaged in diſcourſe with ſome gentlemen, and waited very patiently till the converſation ended. At laſt the company went away. Viero aſked his gueſt to dine with him, in a manner that convinced him he had expected no company. Dinner was at laſt ſerved up, conſiſting of pulſe and ſome dried fiſh. Ciacco immediately perceived the trick that was put upon him by Biondello, and reſolved to be even with him.——In a few days after, Biondello met him; and, with a ſneer, aſked him how he liked his entertainment? "Exceed-"ing well, (replied Ciacco;) perhaps before eight days I may "have an opportunity of ſhewing my gratitude."—Shortly after Biondello left him Ciacco met a porter, called him to his houſe, and giving him a large flaſk, bade him follow him. He led him to the palace of Caccivuli, and there ſhewed him a gentleman of gi-

gantic

IX.

There many a regal Chief of antient note,
Wallowing thro' mire obſcéne lament their lot,

In

gantic ſize and choleric aſpect, walking about with that expreſſion of countenance deſcribed in the pathos:

——— He look'd ſo wond'rous grim,
His very ſhadow fear'd to follow him.

This was Philippo Argenti, the moſt irritable of all human beings. "Go to that gentleman, (ſays Ciacco) and tell him, that Biondello "ſends to him, and entreats him, as he is a celebrated glaſs-painter, "that he will *erubinate* your bottle with his beſt claret, as he has "ſome friends to treat:—but take care to keep out of his reach, "as he is apt to pay his meſſenger in a coin not always current."—The porter delivered his meſſage, and Argenti immediately conſtrued it into an inſult, from the known character of Biondillo. With a menacing voice he deſired the Porter to come near, and he would ſhow him and his bottle a ſpecimen of that glaſs-painting that Biondello required. The porter, fearing the conſequence, kept aloof, and at laſt fairly took to his heels.—Ciacco, when the porter returned, paid him liberally; and having thus laid the plot, ſet out immediately in queſt of Biondello, to bring him in the way of Argenti before his wrath ſhould ſubſide. By this time Biondello had

forgot

In ruin roll'd, like brethren of the ſty."
"Oh! could I ſee," ſtill trembling I exclaim'd,
By Heav'n's afflicting hand his fury tam'd,
Ere yet our Pilot reach the harbour nigh."

X.

forgot what had paſſed; when Ciacco met him with an earneſt countenance, and aſked him when he had been at the palace of Caccivuli? "Why do you aſk?" returned the other. "Argenti (ſays Ciacco) "has been in queſt of you this whole day, about buſineſs of the laſt "importance." Biondello, expecting a good dinner at leaſt, immediately ran into the ſnare, while Ciacco followed at a proper diſtance, to ſee the iſſue.

"Argenti meantime, boiling with indignation at the ſuppoſed affront couched in the meſſage from Biondello, was at the very inſtant amuſing himſelf with plans of the moſt ſanguinary revenge, when the unfortunate Biondello accoſted him, and requeſted to know his commands. The firſt ſalutation Argenti returned was a blow on the face that covered him over with blood. The unhappy beau in vain demanded the meaning of this outrage: the other made no anſwer, but, by a ſecond blow, and his choler riſing, he tore off his fine embroidered cap and feather, ſeized him by the toupee, and began to drag him through the mire. A crowd gathering, they were with difficulty ſeparated; and, after a great many incoherent paths, an explanation was obtained from Argenti. When the crowd heard

X.

The Bard reply'd; "Yet, ere the coming ſhore
Slackens the labour of the ſtraining oar,
Expect thy wiſh to ſee." Nor more he ſaid;
When round the barriers came a cry of war,
"Seize, ſeize the *Florentine*, reſounds afar;
While faſt *Argenti* fled, by fear betray'd.

heard the inſulting meſſage, which, by Argenti's account, Biondello had ſent to him: they threw the blame upon the latter, as he muſt have known the irraſcible temper of his antagoniſt. In vain the unfortunate victim proteſted, that he never had ſent any ſuch meſſage, and that it muſt have been a miſtake. At laſt he recollected the affair of the lampreys; and then learnt, though too late, to whoſe account he might place the affair. Soon after meeting Ciacco, he was aſked how he liked the claret of Argenti? "As well (ſays he) "as you liked the lampreys at Viero's."——"By this token re-"member, (ſays Ciacco) that ſuch a dinner, where you are the "caterer, will always procure ſuch a bottle of wine, where I have any intereſt with the butler."

XI.

I heard the fiends their brother demons call,
I ſaw the hunted foe exhauſted fall;
And, ſpending on himſelf his bootleſs rage.
I ſaw his bloody fangs,—nor bore the fight,
But hurried onward thro' th' abyſs of night,
While following groans my ſtartled ear engage.

XII.

But other clamours, now diſtinct and clear,
With hubbub wild aſſail'd my ſtartled ear;
There Hell's dire ſenate ſits in awful ſtate.
Her dark Divan the lofty hall ſurrounds,
Her citadel the baleful proſpect bounds,
And pours her millions forth at every gate.

XIII.

Thus *Maro* ſpoke, and thus abrupt I ſaid,
"I ſee! I ſee! thro' Night's diſcloſing ſhade,
Hell's pyramids, that ſeem aſcending fires!
Why ſeem yon tow'rs in crimſon light to glow?"
"The fiery floods, he cry'd, that roll below,
A baleful ſplendour caſt on yonder ſpires."

XIV.

Now ſmoothly ſteering down the deep canal,
Trembling we coaſted round the lofty wall;
High mounds of burning ſteel! that front the coaſt.
Still our unweary'd oars the ſurges ſweep:
At length, exclaim'd the Pilot of the deep,
"Haſte, haſte on ſhore, and ſeize the fated poſt!"

XV.

XV.

But ſoon, at ev'ry paſs, the Guard of Hell,
Who erſt from Heav'n in flaming ruin fell—
"Stop there, preſumptuous Man," indignant cry'd;
"Let not thy mortal feet our bounds profane,
Nor venture to ſurvey our myſtic reign."
The Bard a parly ſought.—The Demons cry'd,

XVI.

"Come thou! and let the Mortal find his way
All dark, and guideleſs, to the realms of day;
Send him to ſeek the path he lately trod!
But thee, his guide, another doom awaits,
Ordain'd within thoſe adamantine gates
For ever to endure the penal rod *."

XVII.

* The difficulty the Poets meet with in finding their way into the Theatre of Hereſy, is not introduced merely to enliven the poem with

XVII.

Heavy and damp the deadly ſentence fell;
Then who the tempeſt of my ſoul can tell!
All ſolitary left, of friends forlorn!
" Paternal ſhade, I cry'd, whoſe guardian arm
Led me thro' fields of fate, ſecure from harm,
Leave me not thus, in endleſs night to mourn!

with an embarraſſment. The Demons oppoſe the detection of thoſe ſcenes where that falſe philoſophy is puniſhed, whoſe employment it had been to gloſs over vice by the colours of eloquence, and ſupport it by argument; as by that they ſtrike at the root of all moral obligation, and endeavour to looſen every tie of ſociety. And as the powers of darkneſs are deſcribed as thus employed *below*, we find *above*, that ſuch is the allurement of vice, and ſuch the ſophiſtry of the Paſſions in defending themſelves, that the opinions dangerous to morality and religion are ſtill anſwered, they ſtill ſprout up anew in different ſhapes, and afford, if not the moſt difficult, yet the moſt troubleſome employment to the advocates of reaſon and truth.

XVIII.

If yon forbidden gate the Demons bar,
Why linger here, and tempt unequal war?
When Fate herſelf commands us to retire!"
"And wilt thou hearken ſtill to daſtard fear?
Heard'ſt thou the call, he cry'd, that ſent us here?
Down, down, it leads us thro' yon central fire!

XIX.

Tremble no more,—but here in ſilence ſtay,
While I explore the dangers of the way:
Nor doubt my quick return." He ſpoke and fled.
Lonely I ſtray'd along the diſmal ſhore,
Pond'ring the ſtrange adventure o'er and o'er,
And ſtill his ling'ring ſtay encreas'd my dread.

XX.

The parly ends; the maſſy gates unfold,
And in the Stygian crew by thouſands roll'd,
While on their rear the clanging portals cloſe.
The Chief returns, with ſtep demure and ſlow;
On his pale aſpect hung the cloud of woe,
And thus his deep indignant ſorrow flows:

XXI.

"Shall our commiſſion'd courſe determine here!
Shall yon black Cherubim their enſigns rear
In vain, for other arms ſhall force our way!
Deſpond not then! but wait th' eventful hour;
Their pride of old oppos'd a mightier pow'r,
Whoſe force yon ruin'd battlements diſplay.

XXII.

XXV.

Yon valves that never close the Victor pass'd;
Before him yawn'd th' interminable waste;
Th' eternal dungeons lay in ruin round,
The Stygian host his single arm withstood;
And well they knew what deadly woes ensued:
Where op'ning *Hades* mourns his antient wound."

END OF THE EIGHTH CANTO.

CANTO THE NINTH.

ARGUMENT.

By the Interpoſition of an unexpected Viſitant, the Poets at length obtain admiſſion within the walls of the Metropolis.—Here the firſt object preſented to the view is the THEATRE *of* HERESY: *where among the other* HERESIARCHS, *they find the Souls of a* POPE *and an* EMPEROR.

CANTO THE NINTH.

I.

HE ſpoke, I felt the cold contagion ſpread:
The friendly ſpirit ſaw my riſing dread,
And with diſſembled hope aſſuag'd my fear:
Then ſtood ſuſpenſe awhile and liſten'd round
Where fogs tumultuous roll'd, the ſight confound
In vain! no welcome ſummons met his ear.

II.

Conqueſt was promis'd by the pow'rs on high:
Can Heav'n recede! and Hell its force defy?
Why ſtays her meſſenger! amaz'd he ſaid.
I mark'd his wav'ring mind, and inſtant drew
Concluſions unforeſeen, and terrors new
From the deep muſings of the MANTUAN ſhade.

III.

"On Hell's extremeſt bound thy lot was thrown,
What could allure thee thus thro' worlds unknown,
From yon' calm ſphere beyond the reach of pain;
Did any one before the voyage try?"
I ſpoke, and thus the MANTUAN's mild reply:
"Long ſince, my feet explor'd the dark domain!

IV.

IV.

"Scarce had I left the chearful bounds of day,
When, new to all the terrors of the way,
ERICTHO * ſent me thro' the flaming deep.
Fearleſs I plung'd among the felon crew,
And from the midſt a choſen ſpirit drew
In long reluctance up the horrid ſteep.

V.

Her potent word the nether deep diſplay'd,
Where JUDAS hides in Hell's remoteſt ſhade,

* A famous Sorcereſs of Sicily, to whom SEXTUS, ſon of POMPEY, came according to LUCAN, to learn the event of the battle of *Pharſalia*, and his own fate. Her incantations are diſplayed in the ſixth book of *Pharſalia*, with great pomp of numbers, and a certain wild ſublimity. She is there deſcribed as hunting over the field of battle for a corpſe, not yet cold, as the fitteſt for her necromantic purpoſes. She inſpires him with new life, and renders him vocal by the aſſiſtance of the ſpirit which Virgil mentions here.

And bade the ghoſts obey her mighty law.
Wont to inſpire the ſealed lips of death
With ſad prophetic ſounds, and magic breath,
The Sorc'reſs held the central world in awe."

VI.

Where yonder noiſome frogs eternal riſe
From the pale wave, and intercept the ſkies,
Fearleſs I paſt yon' ever-burning ſpires.
Tho' danger keeps the gate, th' unfiniſh'd word
Broke off, ſucceeded by a ſight abhorr'd,
Hov'ring on high amid the folding fires.

VII.

Three female forms, with recent blood embru'd,
On the tall battlements in Council ſtood.

And

And ev'ry face a ſnaky vizor wore.
Green warping Hydras form'd the flowing veſt,
And twin'd Ceraſtæ wove the horrent creſt,
Whoſe mingled hiſſings ran around the ſhore.

VIII.

My guide, who knew the daughters of deſpair,
Exclaim'd, "behold MEGARA's threat'ning air;
Yonder her deep remorſe ALECTO feeds!
The third, yet fiercer ſtill * an hideous ſtore
Of vengeance hoards, and counts it o'er and o'er,
The dire atonement of unrighteous deeds.

* Alluding to the meaning of the name TISIPHONE, *i. e.* the avenger of blood.

IX.

IX.

Soon as they ſpy'd us from their ſtation high,
They ſent a ſcream that ſhook the gloomy ſky,
And beat their breaſts, and menac'd from afar.
" Away!" MEDUSA thunders at the gate;
Her ſtern petrific eye ſhall fix your fate.
Away! great THESEUS felt our force in war."

X.

" Turn, turn away, the trembling Poet cries,
Leſt that portentous viſion meet thine eyes."
Speaking he turn'd, averſe, nor I delay'd,
With folded hands, to hide my darken'd ſight:
His kind paternal hands their aid unite,
And cover my pale face with friendly ſhade.

XI.

(Ye ſound of intellect! the truth retain,
Hide in the mazes of the myſtic ſtrain)
Not long we ſtood, till thro' the vaſt profound,
Diſmal afar, but more aſtounding near,
A mingled tumult ſtruck my ſtartled ear,
The vaulted deep and trembling ſhore reſound,

XII.

A whirlwind thus, the child of heav'nly wrath,
Thro' the tall foreſt ſweeps an ample path,
And rends their ſhatter'd boughs, and flings afar;
Thro' the long avenue in duſty pride
The deſolating God is ſeen to ride,
And flocks and ſwains avoid the coming war.

XIII.

Now turn thy ſharpen'd eye to yonder ſteep,
Where damps and noiſome frogs eternal weep.
I look'd! and ſaw a throng, in deep diſmay,
Flying in ſhoals; as when the finny train,
Before the ſable monarch of the main
Innum'rous ſcud, and fill the ample bay.

XIV.

Thus in loud ruin came the bands forlorn.
Behind, a godlike form in tempeſt borne,
Urg'd the foul flight acroſs the ſable flood.
Before his lifted arm the vapours hoar,
In gloomy volumes roll'd to either ſhore;
And full diſclos'd the heav'nly viſion ſtood.

XV.

I watch'd the MANTUAN look—he gave the ſign;
At once with rev'rend awe our heads decline.
He anſwer'd not, but turn'd a wrathful eye,
Full on the gate oppos'd. His beamy wand
The portal ſmote, it felt the heav'nly hand,
The jarring valves disjoin, and open fly.

XVI.

Full in the flaming arch the Seraph ſtood,
"Exiles of Heav'n! he cry'd, rebellious brood!
Learn leſs preſumption, and his arm to dread
Whoſe ſov'reign will admits of no control;
Whoſe vollied thunders oft were heard to roll
Thro' the ſad regions of the ſentenc'd dead!"

XVII.

Dare ye contend with Heav'n, ye ſons of night?
Think how your JAILOR mourn'd a MORTAL's
might!
He ceas'd, and frowning left the gates of death;
Silent and ſtern the MANTUAN ſhade he paſt,
Then mounted upwards on a whirlwind blaſt,*
Like one that burn'd with unextinguiſh'd wrath.

* An alluſion to our Saviour's deſcent into Hell. See Canto 4, and the concluſion of Canto 8th, where this note by a lapſe of the memory, was omitted.———It was the opinion of the times that our Saviour deſcended not only into the ſtate of the dead (Hades) but into the region of eternal puniſhment, to ſhew his diſunion at once over death and hell, and to lead from the LIMBUS PATRUM, the Patriarchs and Antideluvians in triumph. See his retinue deſcribed, Canto 4th. There are numberleſs alluſions to this through the Poem.

XVIII.

To the unguarded gate we bent our way,
Secure of conqueſt in the STYGIAN fray:
And ent'ring flow, our careful eyes explore
The Heav'n-built fortreſs of eternal wrath;
Where viewleſs tortures lin'd the plains beneath,
And execrations ran from ſhore to ſhore.

XIX.

As where old ARLI * ſees the ſtagnant flood
Or nigh QUARNARO ſtain'd with ISTRIAN blood,
Long ſepulchres deform the fun'ral field.
Thus ridgy roſe, and bold, the burning ſpace,
But deeper dykes the Stygian ſoil deface,
And ev'ry tomb a ſtruggling victim held.

* A City of Provence, where Charlemagne overthrew the Saracens, in a pitched battle, but with great ſlaughter of the French.

XX.

Round each ſad furnace glows a lamping flame,
And ev'ry cell reflects a ruddy gleam:
Maſſes of molten ſteel they ſeem'd afar.
Some pow'r ſuſpends their burning valves on high,
And ſends abroad the lamentable cry
Of priſon'd ſouls that curſe their natal ſtar.

XXI.

" Ah Guide divine, explain this horrid ſight,
Say, who are they that mourn their wretched plight
In yon' deep dungeons of outrageous fire?"
" There the HERESIARCHS dwell, the Poet ſaid,
Who their ſad proſelytes from truth miſled,
Their impious followers fill the diſmal choir.

XXII.

XXII.

" In ſubterranean tribes beneath the plain
The victims lie, condemn'd to various pain,
As each more deeply drank of error's wave
Millions unthought the diſtant bound poſſeſs."
Thus ſpeaking, down the wid'ning path we preſs,
Where the wall frowns o'er many a flaming grave.

END OF THE NINTH CANTO.

CANTO THE TENTH.

ARGUMENT.

DANTE *obtaining Permiſſion to addreſs the* HERESIARCHS, *finds among the reſt* GUIDO CAVALCONTI *and* FARINATA UBERTE, *two noble Florentines; the latter of whom gives an obſcure Intimation to the Poet of his impending Exile, and accounts for this extraordinary Privilege of foreſeeing things enjoyed by the Tribes below.*

CANTO THE TENTH.

I.

THE Bard proceeds, and guides my trembling feet
Where round the plain the awful turrets meet.
" Oh! thou, I cry'd, whoſe ſage conducting hand
Teaches my ſteps the dark degrees to ſound,
Say, is it giv'n to ſearch the flaming round,
And learn the ſtories of the ſentenc'd band?"

II.

See from afar their op'ning tombs invite,
And no invidious bard appears in ſight."
Theſe tombs, he cry'd, the hand of fate ſhall cloſe
When from the vale of doom their ſouls return,
Embodied each in fiercer fires to burn,
Dire conſummation of their endleſs woes"

III.

Where yon red furnace glows amid the fire
Old EPICURUS heads the impious choir.
Who thought the Louban air of fleeting breath,
For ever now his dire miſtake he mourns.
Go! where among his train the Atheiſt burns,
And learn the ſecrets of the ſecond death.

IV.

IV.

Thy eager wiſh I ſee."—Abaſh'd, I ſaid,
"Thy counſel kind, my eager wiſh allay'd!
When my too lib'ral tongue thy care control'd."
He anſwer'd not! for deep within the ground
A voice exclaim'd, "Oh hail! thou welcome ſound,
That tun'd my tongue on ARNO's banks of old.

V.

"What wayward chance, Oh! gentle TUSCAN, tell!
Conducts thee thro' the flaming bounds of Hell,
A mortal man?"—With quick inſtinctive dread
I ſeiz'd my Guide; when thus the Mantuan bold:—
"Turn, daſtard, turn! and *HUBERT's ſhade behold!.
See! from the flaming verge he lifts his head."

VI.

* Farinata, of the illuſtrious family of the Uberti of Florence, an Epicurean or materialiſt, by principle, one, "who thought the ſoul

an

VI.

Half-ſpringing from the tomb he ſeem'd to ſcorn,
With high and haughty mien his lot forlorn.
His eye met mine, the Mantuan ſeiz'd my hand,
And led me thro' the dire ſepulchral ſcene,
Where winds a path the burning tombs between.
" Now ſpeak, he cry'd, and tell thy bold demand."

VII.

Near the red furnace in ſuſpenſe I ſtood,
The ſpectre view'd me round with furious mood.
And, Mortal! " whence thy race," intent he cry'd.
With fault'ring voice my lineage I diſplay'd;
" Thou nam'ſt my deadlieſt foes, reply'd the ſhade,
And oft' the proweſs of this arm they try'd.

VIII.

an air of fleeting breath."—He was the ſoul of the Ghibelline or Imperial action.—See Florentine Hiſtory annexed in the reference to this Canto.

VIII.

My arm twice ſwept them from their native plain;
Yet twice they wip'd away th' ignoble ſtain."
Stern I reply'd, "while thine in exile mourn'd."
Rous'd at the word, another ſhade appear'd,
High o'er the flaming verge his front he rear'd,
While in his ſparkling eye impatience burn'd.

IX.

Eager he look'd along the burning ſhore,
And diſappointment blanch'd his viſage o'er:
"Oh! * ALIGHIERI! Oh! my friend! he cry'd;
If to thy daring ſoul this diſmal path
Spontaneous opens thro' the vale of death,
Why has my GUIDO left thy faithful ſide?

X.

* Here is another inſtance that the Poet diſtributes his puniſhment according to his ſtricteſt notions of the criminal's demerit.——Guido Ca-

X.

An hand conducts me thro' the realms of pain,
He cry'd, which haply GUIDO * would diſdain,
For by his voice the ſpectre ſoon was known.
Say, feels he ſtill the ſun's benignant beam,
Again he cry'd, or here in Hell's extreme
Sends from afar the never-dying groan?"

XI.

Suſpenſe awhile he waited my reply,
Then ſunk deſpairing with a feeble cry.

Cavalcanti (the ſpectre meant here) was a Guelf of the white faction, as Dante was, and his moſt intimate friend; but tinctured with the principles of *materialiſm*.———See a beautiful imitation of a Sonnet addreſſed to his Son by Dante in Mr. Hayley's notes to his Eſſay on Epic Poetry.

* This was the Guido to whom the Sonnet before mentioned was addreſſed.—The Poet alludes here to his preference of the Philoſophers to the Poets, a point on which they had many amicable conteſts.

Stern, and unmov'd, the * other ſhade remains,
Pond'ring the fortunes of his exil'd race.
I mourn, I mourn, he cry'd, their deep diſgrace,
More than the cincture of theſe burning chains.

XII.

But ere the fiftieth moon ſhall gild her horn
The vanquiſh'd ſhall rejoice, the victor mourn.
—But whence this laſting hate to HUBERT's † blood,
That breathes ſtill deadly in the voice of law?"
"The direful cauſe, I cry'd, VALDARBIA ſaw,
When to the main ſhe roll'd a ſanguine flood.

* Viz. *Farinata Huberti.*

† Hubert here obſcurely propheſies the expulſion of the Guelfs by Charles of Valois, and the exile of Dante. See his Life and of Dante and Florentine Hiſtory annexed.

XIII.

XIII.

Sighing, he cry'd, "Was mine the ſingle hand
That with your factious blood embath'd the ſtrand?
Did no juſt vengeance point my lifted ſpear?
But this ſole arm, above ignoble dread,
Warded the vengeance burſting o'er your head,
When trembling *Florence* ſaw perdition near."

XIV.

"*Hubert*, I cry'd, the myſtery explain,
(So may your blood, reſtor'd, in *Florence* reign)
And kindly ſolve my doubt; for ſchoolmen tell,
Fate to the fiends ſo deals her dubious light,
That preſent things eſcape their clouded ſight,
While future ſcenes are clearly known in Hell."

XV.

" In theſe ſad realms, the *Tuſcan* ſoul replies,
Diſtinct the ſcenes of *future* time ariſe,
While ſtill the fading *preſent* fleets obſcure.
Nought know the ſentenc'd tribes of paſſing things,
Unleſs ſome wretch condemn'd the tidings brings,
Freſh from the ſtains of yonder clime impure.

XVI.

This privilege alone our ſquadrons boaſt,
Till Preſent, Paſt, and Future, all are loſt
In final doom, and time ſhall be no more."
Vext at my fault, " Oh tell thy ſad compeer,
I cry'd, " his *Guido*, cauſe of all his fear,
Yet ſtrays delighted on the *Tuſcan* ſhore."

XVII.

" This had I told ere now; but thoughts perplex'd,
Tho' now reſolv'd, my anxious boſom vext;
And now adieu,—my Guide forbids my ſtay!"
" But firſt declare what fellows of the tomb,
In burning cells await the final doom,
Secluded ever from the hope of day."

XVIII.

" Round (he reply'd) a thouſand tombs ariſe,
Yon furnace rings with royal FREDERIC's cries.*

His

* The ſecond Emperor of that name, grandſon to Barbaroſſa, and to William the Good, King of Sicily, by Conſtantia his daughter, who, though a profeſſed Nun, was obliged to marry Henry the Sixth, his ſon. By this means, Frederic united in his own perſon the claims of the Houſe of Suabia to the empire, and of the Houſe of Tancred to Naples and Sicily. Theſe claims, as they would have

claſhed

His captive prelates fill the diſmal choir.
Enquire no more!" he cried, and plung'd amain,
With headlong haſte, among the burning train,
And eager ſeem'd to ſeek his bed of fire.

claſhed with the intereſts of the Church, alarmed the Pope (Honorius the Third) particularly when he found that Frederic had taken poſſeſſion of the Sicilies. He firſt kindled a diſpute between Frederic and his Clergy; then, after long and vexatious diſputes, he conſented to a ſeeming reconciliation, and perſuaded the Emperor to undertake a Cruſade againſt the Sultan of Egypt. When he was in the war, the Pope took care to betray his counſels to the Sultan, and pointed out the beſt method of ſubduing him. The Sultan, to embroil the Chriſtian potentates, diſcovered the Papal correſpondence to Frederic, who immediately made peace with him, and returned to Europe to puniſh the Pope. On his arrival in Italy, he took poſſeſſion of Apulia and Sicily; and, to affront the Pope, ſent for a colony of Saracens, whom he ſettled at Nocera in Apulia. In conſequence of this he was engaged in a long and cruel war with the Pope; and, ere it was finiſhed, died in Apulia, by the hands (as is ſuppoſed) of his natural ſon Manfred, or Mainfroi, who is ſaid to have ſtifled him with a wet cloth. He died excommunicated; but the crime that ſeems to have given him a ſeat here was a book, ſaid by ſome to be written by him, by others attributed to his confidential Miniſter, Peter de Vincis, the ſubſtance of which was, The Three Impoſtors, viz. Moſes, Mahomet, and J. C. See C. 13, for the ſtory of Peter de Vincis.

XIX.

XIX.

My Guide I follow'd on with heavy heart;
The gentle Poet ſaw my inward ſmart,
And aſk'd the cauſe. The myſtic threat I told.
" Bid Mem'ry ſtill the fatal words retain,
(He cry'd) and mark the wonders of the plain!
Thy guardian Saint will ſoon thy fate unfold."

XX.

Onward our feet purſu'd the left-hand way,
Behind the burnings caſt a diſmal ray;
And, op'ning in the front, a gloomy vale
Breath'd a ſepulchral ſcent; where, ſteaming round,
Dark, noiſome vapours hide the fatal ground,
And o'er the deep in lazy volumes ſail.

END OF THE TENTH CANTO.

CANTO THE ELEVENTH.

ARGUMENT.

The Poet arriving at the bounds of the Circle of Hereſy, finds the tomb of Anaſtaſius. Virgil then gives a general map or delineation of their intended journey. From him Dante learns that the next region is inhabited by tyrants, oppreſſors, and others of that claſs, whom he accurately diſtinguiſhes into their ſeveral ſpecies. In giving a general view of the other criminals, he aſſigns reaſon why USURY *is puniſhed with other crimes againſt nature.*

CANTO THE ELEVENTH.

I.

NOW bending o'er the high embattled ſteep,
We find the pois'nous vapours of the deep,
Intolerably ſtrong, invade our ſmell.
Full-charg'd with peſtilence the fog aroſe:
Faſt we retreated from the ſcene of woes,
Where a tall fabric crown'd the verge of Hell.

II.

Thoſe words engrav'd, the hapleſs inmate told,
"The Pupil of PHOTINUS * here behold,

* Photinus was a Greek heretic, who held, againſt the Omouſians, that the Son was not equal to the Father, and that the Holy Ghoſt did not proceed from both. His pupil was (according to Dante) Pope Anaſtaſius the Fourth; though Baronius and Bellarmine both deny it. (See Annal. Eccl. anno 497, and Bellar. de Rom. Pont. Cap. 10.) One good effect followed at leaſt from theſe diſputes of the rival parties; each took due care that the ſacred text ſhould not be corrupted by their antagoniſts, and hence the ſcriptural code was preſerved pure; which, had the Church always been at peace, would have been liable to great corruption, where none would have had an intereſt to detect the fraud. Nor, ſuppoſing it had not been corrupted, could its purity have been ſo eaſily proved to unbelievers as it can now, if the Church had not been divided into parties who carefully watched each other. When it is remembered, that thoſe diſputes began in the firſt age of the Church, it will eaſily be perceived what influence they had in preſerving the ſcriptures undepraved.

Whoſe

Whoſe tainted faith the triple crown diſgrac'd!"
" Oh! ſlowly, ſlowly pace the noiſome vale,
(Exclaim'd the Mantuan) leſt your ſenſes fail,
Too weak to bear the ſuffocating blaſt!"

III.

" Say, ſhall we fruitleſs paſs the precious time,
While darkneſs overhangs the diſmal clime."
I ſpoke, and thus the friendly Spirit ſaid:
" Attend! while I prepare thee for a fight
Yet hid within the ſullen womb of night;
Where yon ſuſpended cliffs the valley ſhade.

IV.

Thro' three deſcents of pain our journey leads,
Each holds a tribe condemn'd for lawleſs deeds;

Learn thou their crimes! a ſight will then ſuffice;
There Malice, deadly fiend, abhorr'd by God,
With her twin-race of Violence and Fraud *,
Beneath the penal ſcourge for ever lies.

V.

Above the ſons of Violence reſide,
The bands of Fraud below together hide;
(Vile Fraud! the heav'n-born ſoul's peculiar blot!)
For this, in fiercer pains, the traitors keep
Their horrid vigils far in yonder deep:
Hated of Heav'n, and fill the loweſt lot.

* The Poet here gives, 1ſt, The general diviſion of the remaining region into the two grand departments of Violence and Fraud. (St. v.) Then he deſcends to a particular enumeration of each claſs. In the department of Violence he mentions robbers, ſuicides, uſurpers, atheiſts, and blaſphemers, with thoſe who have been guilty of unnatural practices. (St. 7—9.) The various ſpecies of fraud are next given in detail. (St. 9—11.)

VI.

VI.

But the Blaſphemer, who his God defy'd,
With him who flung the load of life aſide;
And he whoſe arm againſt his neighbour roſe,
The nearer frontiers fill; a triple ſpace,
Ruffians and Spendthrifts hold: the foremoſt place
With the proud Atheiſt doom'd to kindred woes,

VII.

The rear contains the foul blaſpheming band,
Who rais'd againſt their God the impious hand,
Arraign'd his goodneſs, and his wrath defy'd.
GOMORRAH there, and foul CAORSA's race.
In mingled bands the paths of horror trace,
With thoſe whoſe callous hearts the truth deny'd.

VIII.

FRAUD ſkulks below with all her various brood,
There darkling dwell the foes of public good,
The pilf'rer, and the cheat, his dark ally.
With thoſe, whoſe felon hand their truſt betray'd,
Hypocriſy in ſaintly garb array'd,
Corruption foul, and frontleſs Perjury.

IX.

The central gulph, replete with fiercer pains,
The faithleſs friend, and all his tribe contains.
O'er them the Father of the Fiends preſides.
Their common race with all its ties forgot,
In mutual hate they mourn their hideous lot,
Where the firſt demon rules the frozen tides.

X.

X.

"Diſtinct and clear, I cry'd, thy words ſublime
Sketch the ſad regions of the horrid clime.
But ſay, why ſentenc'd to a milder hell,
Where round the fortreſs floats the troubled wave
Envy and Strife their ſiſter legions lave;
Deſerve they not in fiercer pains to dwell?

XI.

Say, why the votaries of lawleſs love
Ride the mad tumult of the winds above;
While like the conflict of the noiſy bar
Still battling with their tongues, the Miſers * chide.
Why guiltleſs are they doom'd the ſcourge to bide?
Or, guilty, why ſo light a ſentence ſhare?

* The different degrees of puniſhment allotted to the miſer and uſurer, ſeem founded on the principle that a man may be a miſer without any flagrant injuſtice or offence againſt ſociety being laid to his charge: But an uſurer is a greater peſt to ſociety, as his bunneſs conſiſts in taking advantage of the diſtreſſes of others.—In the line

XII.

"Who made thee judge? incens'd, the ſpirit cry'd,
Was then my former love in vain apply'd,
Which taught the juſt degrees of heav'nly ire?
The ſenſual feel a lighter load of woe,
But FRAUD and MALICE ſeek the gulph below,
Together doom'd to everlaſting fire.

XIII.

of Dante indeed, larger intereſt for money was more neceſſary than now, as the lenders ran a greater riſque, but this only left room for greater extortion.

It ſeems conſonant to our general notions of equity, that fraud in the other world ſhould be puniſhed more ſeverely than violence, tho' in this ſtate of things it would not always be convenient, for violence ſtrikes more immediately at ſociety than fraud; but in the eye of reaſon, fraud, and the crimes which it gives birth to, ſeem of a much more atrocious hue than the worſt effects either of love, ambition, or avarice. The latter proceeds merely from the indulgence of their reſpective paſſions; the former from a corruption of reaſon itſelf, hence called in the text

———The Heav'n-born ſoul's peculiar blot."

The crimes of violence moſtly proceed from temptation, the crimes of fraud from deliberation.—Hence fraud, perfidy, and ingratitude, thoſe vices of a clear head and cool blood, ſeem juſtly doomed to a lower and more ſevere lot.

XIII.

The ſons of lawleſs love and haſty rage
Hence feel the pitying hand their pangs aſſuage.
Weigh thou their merits, and thy doubts forego!—
The deeply-damn'd within the fortreſs dwell,
Without, far ſtation'd to the bounds of Hell
In lighter ſquadrons range the ſons of woe."

XIV.

" Can I repent my doubts! illumin'd Bard,
When thus thy heav'nly words my doubt rewards?
Oh! let me yet thy kind attention claim;
CAORSAS wealthy crew you nam'd before!
Could Uſury ſend them to the burning ſhore
With SODOM's ſons to feed the penal flame?

XV.

XV.

" Search thy philoſophy, the Poet cry'd ;
Dame Nature there, the pure primæval guide
Whence patient ART her operations form.
Still from ſome vital principle derives
The various line of propagated lives,
And with prolific heat her nations warms."

XVI.

But from her hallow'd path the Miſer ſtrays,
Who lets pale av'rice warp his ſordid ways.
Invet'rate foe to nature's ſimple lore
Beneath his influence grows the barren gold.
He ſpeaks, and lo ! the parent ſums unfold
In monſtrous births, a miſbegotten ſtore.

XVII.

But now the ſign oppos'd to ARIES, ſhrouds
Her flaming head among the weſtern clouds,
And in the riſing ſcale aſcends the day.
While with inverted pole, the northern car
Is ſeen ſuſpended o'er the BOREAL ſtar;
Haſte! haſte! the moments chide our long delay."

END OF THE ELEVENTH CANTO.

CANTO THE TWELFTH.

ARGUMENT.

The Poets, with difficulty, make their way through a craggy and dangerous paſs, between the Regions of HERESY *and* OPPRESSION.—*In the latter Diviſion, they find under a Guard of Centaurs, the Souls of Tyrants, Oppreſſors, Conquerors, and all who were guilty of deliberate and open Violence againſt Society or Individuals. After taking a View of their Puniſhment, by the aſſiſtance of a* CENTAUR, *they reach the* FOREST *of* SUICIDE.

CANTO THE TWELFTH.

I.

THE ſhelving path our cautious ſteps purſue;
When lo! another gulph appears in view;
Th' aſtoniſh'd eye ſtarts back, our feet recoil.
Not with ſuch fearful view the TRENTIAN ſteep
Looks dizzy down upon the circling deep
Where ſlow invaſion mines the mould'ring ſoil.

II.

II:

There oft the thund'ring ruin ſmites the plain:
The flood recoils, and leads her hurried train
Far, far aſlope! the riv'n rock disjoins.
So ſeem'd th' eternal breach; the hideous guard
Was He,* whoſe form the horrid mixture marr'd,
By CRETA mourn'd through all her fair confines.

III.

He heard our footſteps ſound along the ſhore,
Then rous'd to vengeance, ſent his voice before,
And

* The famous Minotaur of Crete, a monſter, celebrated by the Poets, ſuppoſed to be half formed like a man, and half like a bull. The Greek mentioned here is Theſeus, Son to the King of Athens, who

And tow'rd the Poet bent his furious way,
All horrible with ſelf-inflicted wounds.
" Avaunt, the Poet cry'd, thoſe ſolemn bounds
No GREEK invades with purpoſe to betray!

IV.

No ſtern aſſaſſin, by a ſiſter led,
Comes to demand thy miſcreated head.

who reſcued his country from the ignominious tribute of ſeven noble youths who were exacted by the Cretan Monarch yearly, for the murder of his ſon by the *Athenians*, and given to be ſlaughter'd by the Minotaur. Ariadne, the Cretan princeſs, conceiving a paſſion for Theſeus, is ſaid to have given him a clue, which conducted him through the mazes of the labyrinth, where the Minotaur was lodged. By this, after having killed the monſter, he was conducted ſafe back. This fabulous being has not the moſt happy effect in making his appearance among real hiſtorical perſonages, though he appears in other reſpects a proper enough attendant on the race of violence and wounds.

A blameleſs mortal ſent to yonder deep
A paſſage craves."—As with indignant bound
The bellowing bull reſents the mortal wound,
So danc'd the grieſly ſhape around the ſteep.

V.

" Retire! and give his rage an ample path ;
'Tis raſhneſs thus to brave eternal wrath !"
Exclaim'd the Bard, and by another way
O'er-hanging rocks ſublime, and ridges drear,
Whoſe tott'ring baſes fill'd my ſoul with fear,
The Mantuan led me, ſtruck with pale diſmay.

VI.

" See! yon' tall Theatre in ruin roll'd,
My ſteps, he cry'd, the barrier paſs'd of old,

While

While yet in tow'ring ſtate the circle ſtood:
But, ere from earth the mighty ſpoiler came,
Deſtruction levell'd round the ſtately frame,
And op'd a paſſage o'er the Stygian flood.

VII.

All nature ſeem'd to own the MIGHTY MAN;
A trembling ſympathy thro' HADES ran;
And CHAOS thought her reign returning new:
Loud earthquakes min'd the wide infernal field,
Far, far below her deep foundations reel'd
And wide, around a length of ruin drew.

VIII.

Here take thy ſtand; and view the diſmal dell,
What floods of gore in boiling torrents ſwell,

Whoſe flagrant wave the ſons of violence hides.
Thine is the ſpell! inſatitiate luſt of pow'r!
That charms the terrors of the tort'ring hour,
And down the ſteep your ſlaves triumphant guides.

IX.

The bloody billows ſwept a ſpacious round,
While, muſt'ring fierce upon the riſing ground
Succinct in arms, a band of bowmen ſtood.
Three quiver'd chiefs forſook the ghoſtly band
And ſternly trac'd us on the ſanguine ſtrand,
While thus the firſt exclaim'd in ireful mood.

X.

" Avaunt, or quick the fatal arrow flies;
How dare you thus indulge your curious eyes?—

Or

—Or tell what plagues await your ſentenc'd ſouls?"
"Ceaſe! moody ſon of wrath, the Bard reply'd,
Dearly you earn'd your over-weening pride!
Know, fate alone our downward courſe controls.

XI.

Go! bid your Chief attend, he turn'd, and ſaid,
This for ALCIDES' ſpouſe the ranſom paid
In blood. The ſecond ſhap'd the PELIAN Lance.†
Stern PHOLUS joins to lead the endleſs chace.
Still ſhow'r their ſhafts on yon' devoted race,
When from their ſentenc'd lots, the ſlaves advance."

XII.

† It will be neceſſary to inform the reader who is not verſed in fabulous Hiſtory, that this was the ſpirit of Neſſus, the Centaur, deſcribed by the Poets as half man, half horſe.—Neſſus was employed by Hercules to carry his wife over the river Evenus, and on offering her

XII.

He ſpoke, with cautious ſteps I nearer drew,
CHIRON beheld, and bent her fatal eugh;
Exclaiming, "Hence, ye troublers of the dead!
What boldneſs leads your earthly feet profane
To ſhake with mortal weight the trembling plain;
Hence! ere this ſhaft transfix your ſentenc'd head."

her violence on the further ſhore, was ſhot with a poiſoned arrow by Hercules.——The Centaur, in his laſt moments, preſented his upper garments to the lady, tinctured with his envenomed blood; and requeſted her to preſerve it as a ſure philtre to ſecure or regain her huſband's affections. She, in a fit of jealouſy, ſent it to her huſband, who putting it on, as he was ſacrificing, was ſeized with intolerable pain, and expired in a fit of raging madneſs; in which he killed the meſſenger, who had brought the fatal preſent.——See the Franchiniæ of Sophocles, and Ovid Met. B. 9.—He that ſhaped the Pelian ſpear was Chiron, the famous tutor of Achilles.

XIII.

XIII.

The Bard reply'd, "from no ſiniſter view
His earthly feet the darkſome way purſue.
'Twas fate compell'd him, no profane delight;
An angel-voice the dire injunction gave.
To wander here, unconſcious of a grave
Under my guidance thro' the realms of night.

XIV.

But, by that pow'r that 'tends me down the ſteep,
Send, I adjure thee! ſend thro' yonder deep
Some faithful hand to guide his lonely way,
And waft the mortal o'er the crimſon flood.
—Suſpenſe awhile the troubled viſion ſtood,
Then gave the ſign; his ready mates obey.

XV.

XV.

Nessus conducts us to the crimson flood,
Where seeth'd by ceaseless fires, the Men of Blood
Stand in long files.—Anon a furious wave
Sublim'd to tenfold rage by fires unseen,
Comes, with a thund'ring tide their ranks between,
And loud laments along the borders rave.

XVI.

"Where yon pale heads above the flood ascend,
The Tyrant learns to weep," exclaim'd the Fiend,
And feels the everlasting weight of blood.
There † Dionysius, link'd with ‡ Pheræ's Lord,
Conspicuous frown among the Band abhorr'd,
And o'er their massacres for ever brood."

XVII.

† Tyrant of Syracuse, who being expelled by the citizens, became a schoolmaster in Corinth.

‡ Alexander of Pheræ, one of the most inhuman tyrants of his time; yet he, though familiarized to blood, is said to have shed tears

XVII.

There ſtern OBIZO, † by his ſon betray'd,
With AZZELINO ‡ fate, a darker ſhade;
Still

at the repreſentation of a play of Euripides. He had made a liſt of perſons whom he meant to put to death; and among the reſt his wife's two brothers. This was found by his wife, and ſhewn to them. They threatened her with inſtant death if ſhe did not conſent with them, and aſſiſt in diſpatching the tyrant. She was obliged to conſent, and next night removed his ſword from his bed head, on which the aſſaſſins entered the room, and diſpatched him.

PLUTARCH.

† Marquis of Terrara, of the noble family of the Eſte, who, by every ſpecies of tyranny and oppreſſion, had accumulated a vaſt fortune, and was at laſt ſmothered with a pillow by his own ſon, for his riches.

‡ Lord of the Trivigiana.—He, under pretence of aiding the party of Frederic the ſecond, deſtroyed all the country from Bologna to Padua, with fire and ſword, and reduced it under his dominion.—Having ſuppreſſed a rebellion of Padua, he took twelve thouſand priſoners,

Still as we paſs'd, the Centaur led the way.
The MANTUAN ſeem'd his office to reſign.
Anxious I turn'd me to the Bard divine,
" Proceed, he cry'd, thy recent guide obey.

XVIII.

Another Legion there our eyes behold,
Full on their backs, the bloody billows roll'd.

ſoners, and ſhut them up in a vaſt theatre of wood, under the guard of his victorious army. This he ordered to be ſet on fire, but before the fire was kindled, he aſked his Chancellor, (whom he ſuſpected of ſome ſhare in the rebellion) " if he knew thoſe criminals ?"---He anſwered in the affirmative, and ſhewed a voluminous regiſter, where all their names and miſdemeanours were written at large.—Then, ſays Azzolino, as I have received many favors from his Infernal Majeſty, I intend to make him a preſent of all theſe ſouls, and leſt they ſhould appear in a tumultuary body before the monarch, you, with your regiſter, ſhall attend, to furniſh him with an accurate liſt of their names. He accordingly ordered his guards to throw him over the rampires, and commanded the pile to be ſet on fire.———He was at laſt defeated by Pallavicini on the banks of the Addua, in the year 1260, and choſe to die of his wounds, rather than ſuffer any aſſiſtance.———Villani Hiſt. Florentin.

There,

There, ſkulking low, was ſeen a ſhade forlorn,†
Who dy'd with Britiſh blood the hallow'd floor;
Old Father THAMES along his willowy ſhore
Still ſeems the young PLANTAGENET to mourn.

XIX.

Then to the middle bath'd in torrent fire,
Banking the flood, appear'd a ghaſtly choir,
And length'ning down the vale, ſucceſſive bands
In juſt gradation roſe, aſcending ſtill,
'Till, quiv'ring o'er their feet, the ſcanty rill
With ſhallow crimſon fluſh'd the pebbly ſtrand.

XX.

† Guy of Montfort, ſon to the famous Simon de Montfort, Earl of Leiceſter, who heading the Barons againſt Henry the third of England, was defeated by Prince Edward, and loſt his life in the battle of Eveſham.—His ſon, to revenge his death, aſſaſſinated young Henry, nephew to the King, and ſon to Richard, King of the Romans, in the great church of Viterbo.——Villarie Landino, Villutello.

XX.

Lo! round yon' point the boiling depths encreaſe,
Th' attendant cry'd, " 'till yonder floods embrace
With overwhelming ſurge the tyrant crew.
Emerging thence their Legions ſeek the light;
Then, gradual ſink, amid the gloom of night,
'Till yon' red deluge folds them from the view.

XXI.

† PYRRHUS, and TARQUIN ‡ there for ever wail,
Where yonder waves the giant-bulk aſſail

† King of Epirus.——See his Life in Plutarch.

‡ The ſon of Tarquin the proud, the laſt King of Rome. It was he who diſhonoured Lucretia; which rouſed the people of Rome to vengeance, and cauſed the expulſion of his father.——In the laſt attempt made by Tarquin to recover his diadem, Sextus the tyrant, and Brutus, the firſt Conſul, fell by mutual wounds.——Livy. L. 1.

Of § ATTILA, the ſcourge of human kind!
The REINERS‖ too, an execrable pair!
Their moonlight murthers weep, and nightly war,
In name, and fame, and endleſs doom combin'd.

§ King of the Huns, called by contemporary hiſtorians "the ſcourge of God," for his terrible devaſtations in the weſt.——For a very animated and curious account of this extraordinary people, ſee Gibbon's Decline of the Roman Empire. Vol. 5, octavo edit.

‖ Two noblemen of the ſame name, but different families, took the opportunity of the diſputes in Florence, to indulge their innate cruelty.

The phalanx of tyrants and homicides immerſed at different depths in a deluge of blood, and obliged to keep their ranks, or expoſe themſelves to the arrows of the Centaurs, gives a lively idea of the bloody engagement between the Romans and Parthians, on the plains of Carrhæ, where the Roman Legions were nearly in the ſame ſituation with the criminals deſcribed here.

To thoſe readers who are fond of allegorizing the puniſhments of Dante, the deluge of boiling blood in which the ſouls of tyrants and aſſaſſins are immerſed, gives a very lively idea of the horrors of an unquiet conſcience; a ſtate of mind deſcribed in a few words by Mr. Burke, but with more ſublimity than by any Poet I have ever met with: "a ſtate, he ſays, where one terrific image grows to ſuch a ſize, "that it breaks down all the partitions of the mind."——Treatiſe on the Sublime and Beautiful. I quote from memory, not having the book near me.

END OF VOL. I. AND CANTO XII.